FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND

#203 AUG/SEPT

A DYNACOMM MAGAZINE
FORREST J ACKERMAN, EDITOR

FAMOUS MONSTERS® OF FILMLAND

SPECIAL ISSUE!

A TRIBUTE TO THE MERCHANT OF MENACE: ALL ABOUT VINCENT PRICE

PLUS

HIS TERRORIFIC CO-STARS REMEMBERED

KARLOFF

RATHBONE

LORRE

STEELE

COLLECTOR'S EDITION
MANY RARE PHOTOS

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The abominable face of **THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES.** (A.I.P., 1971)

HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU, KID

We promised when Vincent died that we would prepare an issue worthy of the Gentleman Master of Menace, as we did for King Boris when he passed away. It's been over half a year gestating but we think you'll agree that we're delivering nothing less than what was expected. Roger Corman, Christopher Lee, Tim Burton, Roddy McDowall and a score or more other mourners, pro & fan alike, have come forward with their encomiums & anecdotes, their heartfelt tributes to this Nature's nobleman who has now gone to join Boris Karloff, leaving behind only Peter Cushing as the third angle in the triangle of beneficient terror kings.

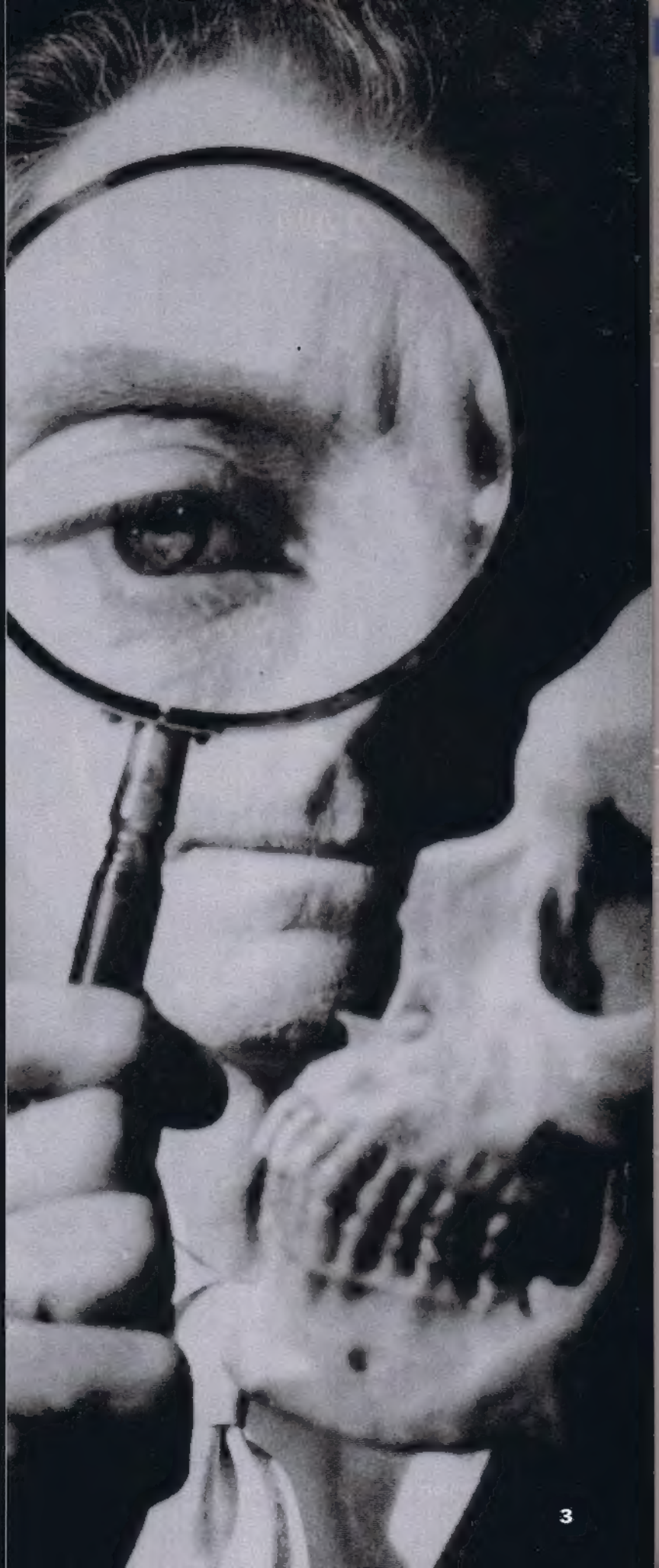
But the publisher and I decided that to flesh out our celebration of "St. Vincent" we devote complementary space to his contemporary cohorts, and so you will find Peter Lorre & Boris Karloff joining Vincent in a featurette on THE RAVEN, Barbara Steele being menaced by him in Edgar Allan Poe's PIT & THE PENDULUM, and Basil Rathbone(as well as Boris) engaged in Machiavellian machinations in the TOWER OF LONDON.

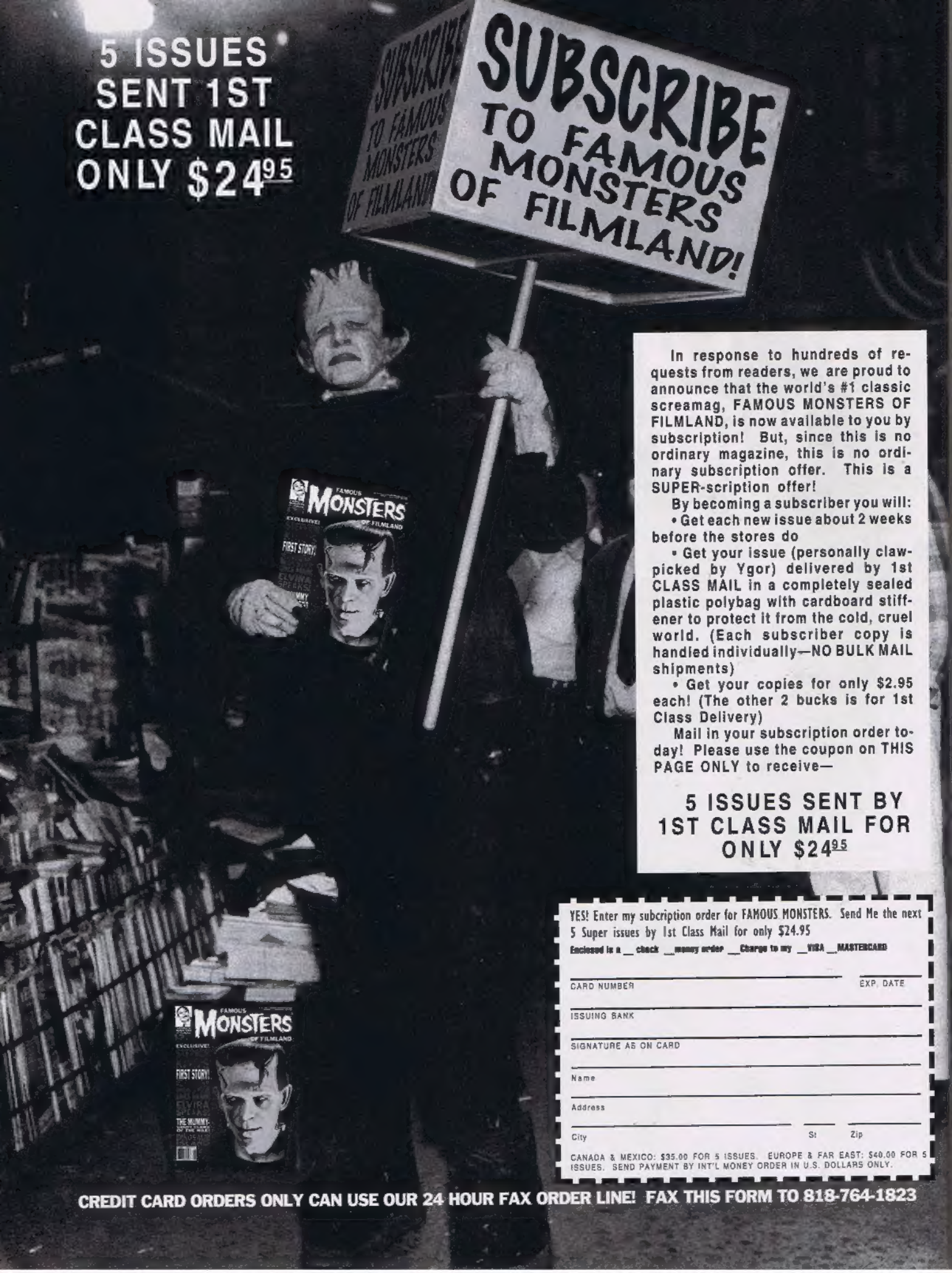
Our Time Vault tale this time is another humdinger, 'The Fifth Candle', exhumed from the mouldering pages of legendary Weird Tales magazine. In addition Mary Shelley continues to survive in the unknown collector's item, 'The Man Demon', which will now cause collectors to create a mad scramble to track down a second copy...we've added another new column—this time all about the ghoulden days of hairaising radio.....and, but check the Tableau of Kongtents for further fine features.

A hint at what's coming in our next issue: A classic FM Filmbook coverage of a virtually forgotten ghostory of 60 years ago, the fearsome seldom referred to SUPERNATURAL.

Super Naturally Yours,

Forrest J Ackerman

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THE HOUSE OF WAX—The face that fired up a new generation of horror buffs in the 50s and set ablaze a second acting career for Vincent Price—from romantic leading man to fanatic leading maniac, painted by FM newcomer Al Gairhea.

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PUBLISHER'S CORONER

At last, we bring you our long awaited special tribute issue to the Prince of Poe-formers—Vincent Price. We'd like to thank all those whose warm memories of Vincent you'll read in these pages with a special thanks to Lawrence French for sharing with us his marvelous, indepth interview with Vincent.

I've noticed of the many aspects of being Vincent that have been examined in discussions of his enduring endearment, none stand out so much as his sense of humor. Vincent appreciated and was able to effect upon others the lightness of life. And I believe, in possessing that trait, he was all the more chilling on the screen because his characterizations, altho often distraught, were frighteningly sober in their vision of their reality. No disgruntled gargoyle he, but often one bemused by the hand of fate. Monsters sans makeups.

Look for our next issue, FM #204, on your newsstand October 1st (promise!) and new issues the first of every month after that (except January & July), without fail. Cross our black little hearts. And,due to your overwhelming support of our efforts, our circulation has been skyrocketing, so, starting with #204, we'll be bringing you your favorite screamag with a new, lower cover price of $4.95!

Ray Ferry
Publisher

THIS ISSUE dedicated to **DENNIS BILLOWS** and his Patient Wife **REBEKAH.** Dennis is a "surwiwor", as fandom's beloved German rocket expert and sci-fi author Willy Ley would have said: Dennis started reading **FM** with issue #1 and is still with us. In the meantime, recently he has volunteered his services for some mind-boggling projects: to collect & organize into scrapbooks all the loose thousands of clippings I have about Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi, Lon Chaney Sr., "King Kong", "Metropolis" and the greatest challenge of all—the Ackermonster! So far he has filled 2 giant volumes about me and is working on #3! Rebekah, thanks for lending your husband to me for this invaluable work, and you may tell him that, as a reward for his industry above & beyond the call of booty, he will get **FM** from me free for the rest of his life—and I hope this will be an incentive to survive for lotsa lustrums in the 21st Century. —4E

WANTED! MORE READERS LIKE

DENNIS & REBEKAH BILLOWS

SON OF A-LUMNI

It was the best thing ever to see the rebirth of **FM.** I'm 13 now and my father had told me about it (when he was a boy and reading **FM.**) When I found out **FM** had started again I started to really get into it. I agree totally with what was said in issue 202. I love the classic horror films much more than the new ones. I feel that horror should be more of an art, rather than trying to see how gory its limits can be. I've always loved a good creep and the classics were good at that. They gave much more of an effect. Some of my favorites are KRONOS, THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN, THEM!, and DRACULA. I've been trying desperately to get a copy of THE GIANT BEHEMOTH but I don't know where it's sold (Try Sinister Cinema- see ad on page 56-pub.) I was thrilled with your article on Vincent Price in issue 201. In my point of view, I think that Vincent Price and Bela Lugosi were the best horror actors of all time.

GARY LEVINE
Woodmore, NY

• It's gratifying for me to know FM is being enjoyed by so many of the children of the "children of the night" Creep reading 'cause the beast is yet to come!—4E

HOSTESS TWINKLE IN HIS EYE

You've done it again! Your interview with Elvira, the one and only Mistress of the Dark, was nothing short of wonderful. Reading about the hostess with the mostess was a dream come true!

ROGER HURST
Glendale, CA

• Glad you liked the article. It's not easy to contain a star as "global" as Elvira in just one little magazine article. She'll be popping up again soon, promise—4E

HIP HIP HOO-RAY!

I can't begin to tell you how excited I was to see DINOSAUR ISLAND immortalized within the pages of **FM** #202. It is a distinct honor to be profiled in the magazine "that started it all"!

I can still remember the day I walked into the Rexall Drug store in Sarasota, FL and saw **FM** #24 (the WEREWOLF OF LONDON issue) growling off the magazine rack at me. That was (shudder) 30 years ago-I was ten.

I can say without hesitation that your magazine made me want to become a filmaker. I loved the articles you used to write on backyard DeMilles and wanted desperately to be one myself. For that I can only say "thanks".

Enclosed is a picture of me as a tyke-

my mother created my monster makeup utilizing scotch tape and colored construction paper. I guess I'm about 6 in the photo, even then dreaming of a career as a **FAMOUS MONSTER**.

FRED OLEN RAY
Hollywood, CA

• What can I say? F.O.R. he's a jolly ghoul fellow which nobody can deny! We're looking forward with batted breath to covering your next Madventure.—4E

WANTED! MORE READERS LIKE

FEED OLEN RAY

FROM FRANK'S DOMAIN

I hope you will find time to read this letter from an English emigrant who lives now in Switzerland. I have recently become a member of the **FAMOUS MONSTERS** club and at last I feel like a part of a whole generation of monster film fans. I'm 31 years of age and married to a really wonderful Swiss girl who shares my likes and loves. I hope to try my hand at writing horror soon. Who knows, I may even get published. Not far away down on Lake Geneva the great Gothic classic "Frankenstein" was conceived and made immortal by the gentle hand of Mary Shelley. The old city of Zurich reminds me sometimes of a Universal monster movie set, except that I haven't seen any living monsters yet. Just a few ugly racists trying to rejuvenate Nazi sympathy. Yuck! Surely, these are the real monsters after all.

As a school kid, I spent most of my time alone in my world of fantasy. I could sympathize with Frankenstein's Monster and many a lunch break was spent hiding away from the school gangs' fists and punches. But, when all is said and done, I grew up to be a rather good monster, now working as a nurse in a clinic for handicapped people, seeing everyday the real outcasts of society. Working with these poor souls I can see the contrast-what might first seem ugly outside can be very beautiful inside. An echo of the famous Universal monsters who in their own ways only sought love and affection.

I attended a fancy dress party at my clinic once. Of course everybody said I should go as myself but instead I dressed up as Karloff's creation. During the party a young, severely handicapped man came up to me and said without any fear at all, "Hello Mr. Frankenstein." What a tribute to the Universal monster movies that someone as handicapped as this man was could identify and immediately recognize the great monster!

I believe history repeats itself and, now that we are coming into a time of reminiscing over the good old days, it is great to see **FM** again!

ANDY WILLEY
Zurich, Switzerland

• I visited the very garden in your neck of the woods where Mary herself sat and probably contemplated her macabre creation. Hope you've had a chance to get there yourself. There's no better place I can think of for Gothic inspiration.—4E

WANTED! MORE READERS LIKE

VANESSA KOMAN

PROUD FATHER

My daughter, Korrie, now three and a half years old, has developed a very healthy interest in horror and sci-fi movies. Her favorites to date are EARTH VS. THE SPIDER , MONSTER ZERO, DRACULA'S DAUGHTER and THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON. I had to miss your big show in Virginia last year because I had my second child during that time. My son, Kyle, was born while we were watching DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS on TNT. The doctor actually turned around several times during the delivery to watch the movie.

I will encourage my son to be himself and encourage his interest in the unusual and fantastic, just like I did with my daughter. She has her own horror books and is very good at recognizing and naming many of the monsters and stars. She calls Mr. Ackerman her Uncle Forry. My wife and I are hoping to get out to the Ackermansion this summer and I would love for her to meet her Uncle Forry now that she is a little older and can understand better.

EVAN E. DAVIS
Rutherford, NJ

• When Korrie visits Forry she'll have a Peter Lorre of a time at the Ackermansion. (Eye-popping!)—4E

FEELINGS

I want to tell you that by bringing back **FAMOUS MONSTERS** you have rejuvenated me. When my eyes came upon that vision from my childhood, I thought I was hallucinating! I read and re-read issue #201 like my life depended on it (I think maybe it did!)

Now I've just picked up Issue #202 and what can I say but Fantastic!! From the Askin cover to all the incredible articles only a Mummy could love. I just had to take the time to thank you very much for bringing back feelings I thought were buried and left for dead. I feel so much alive again. It's like being reunited with long lost friends (Karloff, Lugosi, Chaney and of course the Ackermonster!) I have to mention that I'm writing to you from Colorado Springs, CO. Most people who live here don't realize that Lon was born here and performed here.

MIKE STECKLEY
Colorado Springs, CO.

COMFORTING THOUGHT

The notion that keeps me moving after Vincent Price's death is that **FAMOUS MONSTERS** is back in print. At least I am comforted to know that good ole Ackerman won't let the master of horror stay dead.

WARREN PREWITT III
Address Unknown

• Starting with our next issue and forever more, you'll see a page devoted to St. Vincent just as we do now for Boris Karloff, Lon Chaney and Bela Lugosi.—4 E

WANTED! MORE READERS LIKE

ARTIST JOHN GRAZIANO

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 54.....)

THE MAN OF A THOUSAND GRACES

fja remembers vincent the venerable

LON CHANEY was called "The Man of a Thousand Faces". The late Vincent Price "only" had 8.

First and foremost, of course, he is remembered as a movie actor. And one who specialized in horror roles. Although ironically he was hideous (HOUSE OF WAX) or villainous (THE HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL) or crazed (THE PIT & THE PENDULUM) in less than half of his accredited 110 films, it is these tales of terror upon which his reputation was built. And, unlike John Carradine, Christopher Lee and Basil Rathbone, who have hissed through their fangs that they have never had very much to do with horror films, Vincent made no bones about being typecast as a horror actor. Perhaps he came by it naturally as he recalled at one time that the first film he ever remembered seeing, and it made an indelible impression on him as a child, was the classic German gothic fantasy of "the man of clay, the man of slay," THE GOLEM. Calling on Edgar Allan Poe as an unpaid ghost writer, Vincent regularly quoted the Raven when asked if he resented being identified with villainous roles: "Nevermore!"

But stepping aside for a moment from his macabre roles, his best-known straight role was in the classic mystery thriller of 1944, LAURA. Another of his wartime roles, in fact his favorite, was as a Southern soldier in THE EVE OF ST. MARK, a story of America's civil war in which he was one of the good guys. In the Cecil B. DeMille biblical spectacle, THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, he essayed the dramatic role of an Egyptian architect.

I remember that at the time of Vincent's 101st film, THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES, the Mayor of Los Angeles declared it Vincent Price Week and he was given a red carpet premiere at Hollywood's prestigious Pantages theater. Such personnas as the late Sammy Davis Jr., a card-carrying vampire fan, and Dr. Donald Reed, founder of the Count Dracula Society, were among those in the audience.

wilde man & connoisseur

His second face? One-man show and consummate raconteur. He took on the persona of the controversial Oscar Wilde and portrayed him more than 800 times.

The third? Art connoisseur par excellance. His home in the Hollywood hills was a treasure trove of classic paintings and vintage sculptures. For the famous Sears, Roebuck & Co. department chain he purchased some 15,000 pieces of art to sell to workers with low wages. He wrote a syndicated column read in more than 80 newspapers and was an art juror for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. For "outstanding contributions to art, science, education and betterment of human relations" he received the coveted George Washington Carver Institute's award. When he inaugurated a small art gallery in Beverly Hills he admitted to being awestruck when among his customers came Katharine Hepburn and Greta Garbo!

Face #4? Legitimate stage actor in London's West End theatres and on Broadway in New York. He auditioned successfully for the lead part of Albert opposite the grand dame of the stage, Helen Hayes, as Queen Victoria in the hit play "Victoria Regina".

la plume

Fifth face: Author. He co-wrote a book of film monsters with his son Vincent Barrett Price by his first wife, actress Edith Barrett. (He had a daughter, Mary Victoria, by his second wife, costume designer Mary Grant). He authored a "visual autobiography", "I Like What I Know", in 1959. In 1978 he numbered among "some of my favorite people" producer Roger Corman and actors Cary Grant, David Niven, Marlon Brando and Kirk Douglas. Well, now he is reunited with two of them.

Dear Forry and all!

All those nice people who signed that never to be forgotten book!

I will treasure it as a prime remembrance of my career.

I can of course see the fine hand of Forry behind it and I'm very Grateful! all thanks!

Ever
Vincent

1993

From Vincent to you: his reply to receiving the bound book of hundreds of fans' testimonials, prepared for him in absentia, at the 35th Anniversary FAMOUS MONSTERS WORLD CONVENTION last year.

welles spoken

Face #6: Radio actor. He as an early member of Orson Welles' famed Mercury Theater, where he learned his craft at the feet of a master--although the master was only 22 years old. "He was the finest director I ever worked for," said Price. "He was really brilliant...inventive...a marvelous, marvelous director." Later Price essayed the role of Simon Templar, better known as Leslie Charteris' "The Saint". Now that he has passed on, numerous fans of Vincent Price have already elevated him to sainthood. Said magician Lincoln Bond, a close friend, "He was a true mensch, one of Nature's noblemen."

a welcome guest

Face #7: Television star. In the 1960s he was Egghead, archvillain of Batman. He was featured in such series as "Lights Out", "Science Fiction Theatre", "Mystery Show", "Man from U.N.C.L.E.", "Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea", "Night Gallery", "The Bionic Woman", "Time Express" and "Alfred Hitchcock Presents". Some years ago he appeared on TV in a script polished by Forrest Ackerman, "Horror Hall of Fame", and two years ago was inaugurated into the Hall of Fame Award show at Universal Studios, where he made THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS, TOWER OF LONDON, and ABBOTT & COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN, and received a Grimmy (Grim Reaper statuette) in the posthumous company of Boris Karloff and Alfred Hitchcock, and live recipients Jamie Lee Curtis, Forrest Ackerman and Roddy McDowall. He was also given a Golden Saturn Award by the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films.

culinary delights

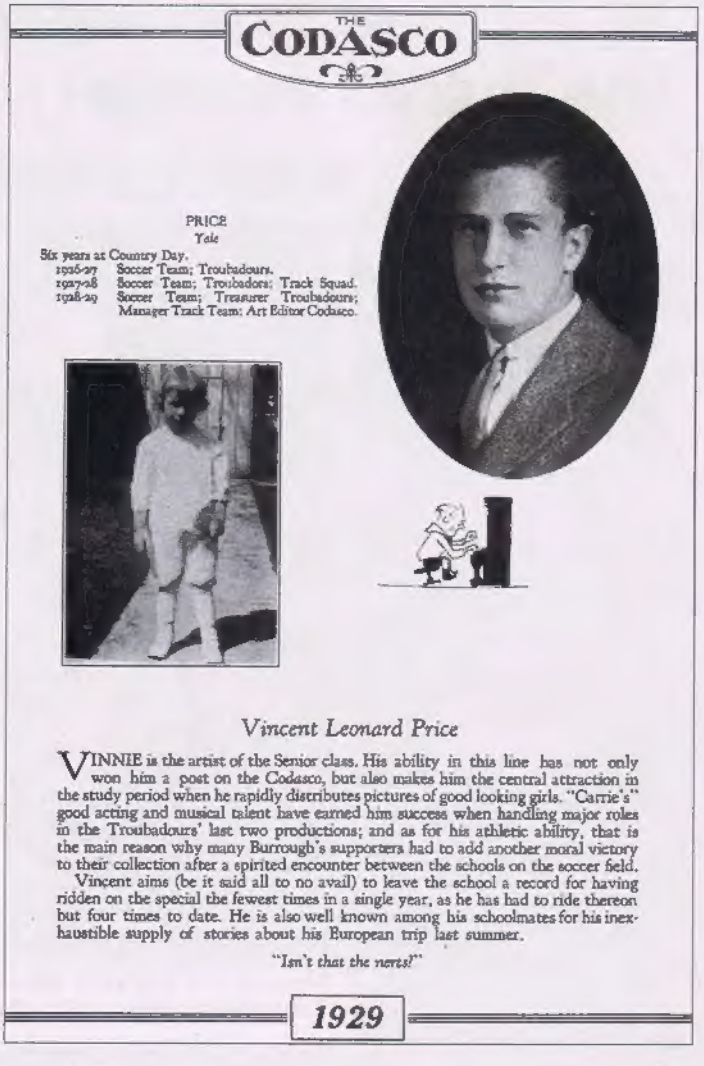
Face #8: Gourmet cook. He authored a culinary classic titled "A Treasury of Great Recipes" and on the Johnny Carson "Tonight Show" demonstrated how to prepare fish in a dishwasher.

finest face of all

Bonus Face: This might be termed Face #9. This was his private face. The face of a gentleman, scholar, gracious host, concerned friend. When one of the big studios was giving a poor little fan of his a hard time over a hobby activity that the studio felt was infringing on their rights, Vincent used his stature in the film community to wag his finger at the legal department and declare "For shame!", and the studio backed off and let the boy continue with his non-profit activity. Toward the end of his life, in spite of deteriorating health, he continued to answer the volumous mail from fans and well wishers in his own hand!

Farewell, Vincent Leonard Price Jr., born 27 May 1911 in St. Louis, Missouri (the same day but different years as his fellow horror thespians Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee). You certainly made your mark in the world. The world is a poorer place, now that it is Price-less, but you have left it a priceless heritage of art treasures, culinary delights; stage, screen and television performances; and humanitarian memories for the thousands whose lives you personally touched.

Classmate most likely to suceed: Vinnie's high school yearbook page —the Class of '29.


THE CODASCO

PRICE
Yale

Six years at Country Day.
1926-27 Soccer Team; Troubadours.
1927-28 Soccer Team; Troubadours; Track Squad.
1928-29 Soccer Team; Treasurer Troubadours; Manager Track Team; Art Editor Codasco.

Vincent Leonard Price

VINNIE is the artist of the Senior class. His ability in this line has not only won him a post on the Codasco, but also makes him the central attraction in the study period when he rapidly distributes pictures of good looking girls. "Carrie's" good acting and musical talent have earned him success when handling major roles in the Troubadours' last two productions; and as for his athletic ability, that is the main reason why many Burrough's supporters had to add another moral victory to their collection after a spirited encounter between the schools on the soccer field.

Vincent aims (be it said all to no avail) to leave the school a record for having ridden on the special the fewest times in a single year, as he has had to ride thereon but four times to date. He is also well known among his schoolmates for his inexhaustible supply of stories about his European trip last summer.

"Isn't that the nerts!"

1929

FIENDS OF A FEATHER

the quintessential quintet of the macabre

Femme foil Barbara Steele—CURSE OF THE CRIMSON CULT, Karloffilm, AIP, 1969

Basil Rathbone, Boris Karloff, Peter Lorre and Vincent clown for the camera on the set of THE COMEDY OF TERRORS (A.I.P., 1963).

Barbara's favorite day of the week? BLACK SUNDAY, of corpse.

Basil the First plays Richard the Third, brother of the Duke of Clarence, played by Vincent, who would later be crowned the "Prince of Wails" for a generation of horror lovers.

london before midnight

VINCENT PRICE...Boris Karloff...Basil Rathbone. A formidable trio ot terror thespians. They dominated the 1939 Universal production of TOWER OF LONDON. But not to be overlooked in the cast were Lionel Belmore, who played in the first (Karloff) FRANKENSTEIN and later in SON OF FRANKENSTEIN...Rose Hobart, Fredric March's ill-fated lady love in DR. JEKYLL & MR. HYDE...Ian Hunter, in the Spencer Tracy Jekyll & Hyde version of 1941 (nearly a half hour longer than its predecessor of 1931)...Nan Grey, who fell under the spell of DRACULA'S DAUGHTER...Leo G. Carroll, who would later become the victim of acromegaly in TARANTULA...and little Donnie Dunnagan, who was menaced by the monster in SON OF FRANKENSTEIN.

a towering cast

A publicity release of the time recorded the heights of the leading players as:

VINCENT PRICE
six feet four inches
BASIL RATHBONE
six feet one and a half
BORIS KARLOFF
six feet even

b.c. = before christopher

Before C. Lee there was another Lee: Rowland V. In fact he was the director of SON OF FRANKENSTEIN, and died in 1975 at the age of 84. Other credits included THE MYSTERIOUS DR. FU MANCHU and THE RETURN OF DR. FU MANCHU and ZOO IN BUDAPEST (1933), for which he also wrote the screenplay. He said of the concept of TOWER OF LONDON:

"Its original story was history, enacted around 500 years ago. The warring days of the 1400s comprised one of the few historical eras which could be dramatized without appreciable change. Men of the 15th century lived in the last remnants of the Dark Ages when perhaps more than at any other time survival of the fittest was the vital rule. These were the men who managed to escape the executioner's ax or an equally bloody death on a battlefield."

they did not ax for it

—But they often got it anyway: The Big Chop from that gray blade known as Mord the Merciless, the grim humorless club-footed official executioner who gave one of the most realistic performances of his career to that time. Boris Karloff. Many years later Vincent Price would be reunited with King Karloff in THE RAVEN (1962).

the wrath of bone

Basil played Richard the Third, lusting after the wife of the Prince of Wales: Rose Hobart. When rascally Richard killed the prince in battle, it left the road open to capture his coveted widow. But enter Clarence (Vincent Price), brother of Richard. Vincent, who is married to her sister, has Rose safely spirited away to a hiding place in London, after which Boris (Mord's) spies locate Anne (Rose) and she is tricked into marrying Basil.

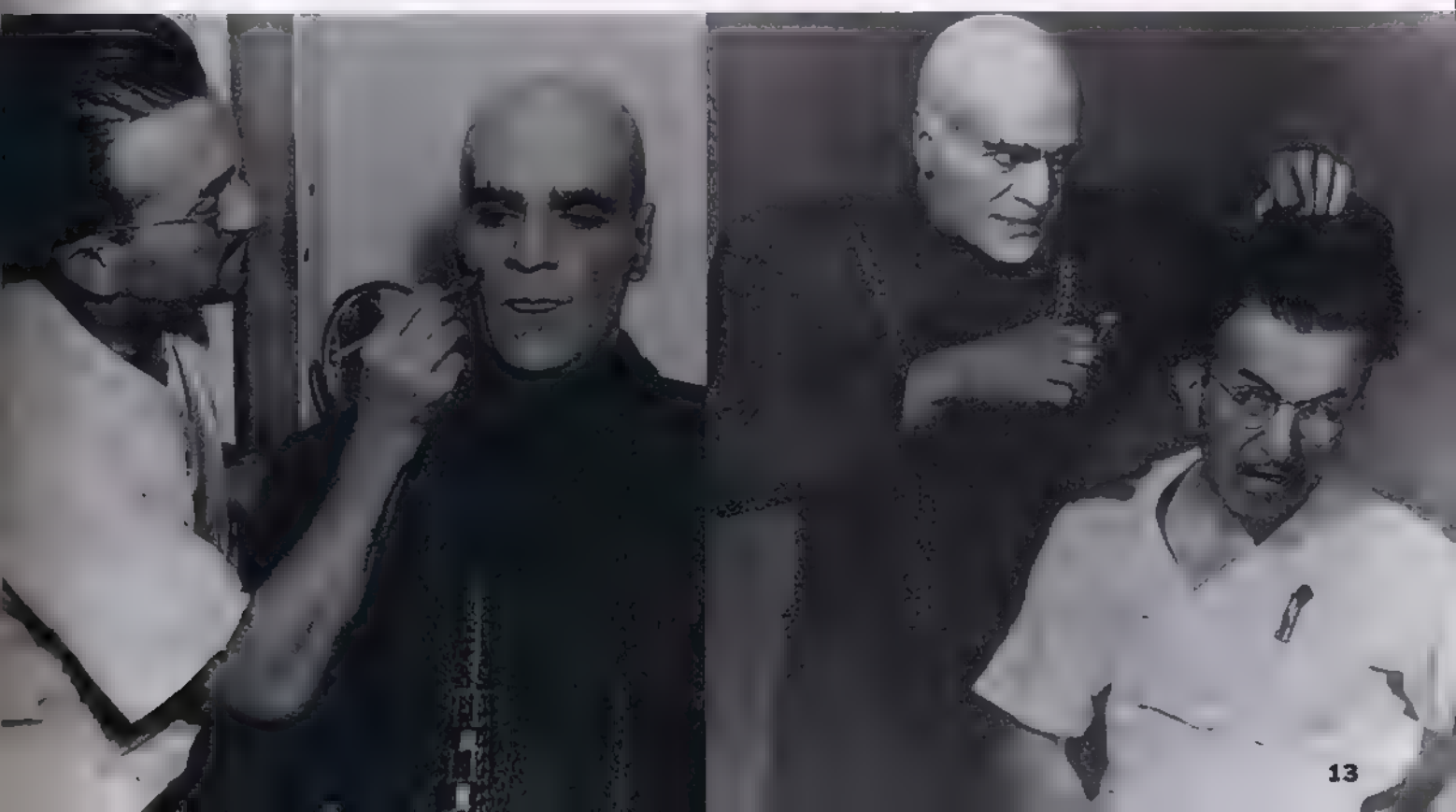
duel personality

Basil provokes an argument with Vincent, which results in a duel, utilizing Basil's favorite weapon—wine!

Where was Bela when Vincent needed him? Rathbone

Peter Lorre, The Lord High Minister of All That Was Sinister, explains the fine art of Oriental dining—how to use a chop stick.

Makeup genius Jack Pierce gets a taste of Mord's wrath when Karloff discovered he would play an executioner in TOWER OF LONDON. He wanted to be hair to the throne.



The long and the short of it—Vincent and Peter Lorre in COMEDY OF TERRORS (AIP, 1963)

Barbara tries to Steele Vincent's sanity in Poe's THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM (AIP, 1961)

& Karloff conspire to drown Vincent by sealing him in a huge wine barrel! Had he been barrel-chested he might not have become barrel-conjested. But Vincent performed his soggy saga like a trouper and never tired of relating the anecdote, as you will read elsewhere in this issue.

Yes, Rathbone, Lorre, Karloff—Vincent acted with all three during his long & distinguished career. And steely Barbara as well.

pit-ty poor vincent

Now who would want to kill such a purr-fect creature as cat-like Barbara Steele? Vincent really had to call on all his thespian powers to make his character in Richard Matheson's adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's PIT AND THE PENDULUM believable.

the reign in spain

At Castle Medina, during the infamous 16th Century Spanish Inquisition, the shrieks and moans of innocent men and women still echo, ghost-faint, from the dungeons where many a dark deed was done.

Early in the picture Elizabeth Barnard (Barbara) has died under mysterious circumstances. Her brother Francis (John Kerr) comes to the Castle to learn more about his sister's untimely demise. Her husband Nicholas (Vincent) first offers the explaination that she died of a blood

maladay, but later reveals she had been found dead inside the dungeon's Iron Maiden, paralyzed with terror!

Nicholas' sister Catherine (Luana Anders) seeks out Francis and explains that when Francis was a child, he disobeyed his father's rule forbidding him to enter the tourture chamber. One day he crept in to examine the instruments. Hearing footsteps, he hid, only to silently witness the death of his mother and uncle at the hands of his own father.

invoking the sanity clause

As the plot thickens, and the state of Nicholas' sanity becomes questionable when he becomes obsessed with the idea that his wife was buried alive, it is decided to exhume her body. When the coffin is pried open it reveals a hideous sight: a contorted corpse which obviously had still been alive when sealed in. The body of one who fought for breath, screamed in vain for release, clawed for escape. But: the thing in the coffin is not Elizabeth!

Is he going mad? Vincent attempts suicide. While recovering, he is disturbed from a filfull sleep by a familiar voice calling to him—the voice of Elizabeth! The invisible voice lures him along a secret passageway to the burial room and there—the real Ezilabeth rises from her coffin!

As Nicholas flees in terror, Elizabeth and Dr. Leon congratulate each other on how well their plan to drive Nicholas mad is going.

Nicholas has now gone completely mad, to the point of believing himsalf to be his own father! He captures Elizabeth and locks her in the Iron Maiden. He struggles with Dr. Leon, pushing him to his death in the pit. He siezes innocent Francis and straps him to the blood-stained table in the pit, then sets the ax-sharp blade of the pendulum overhead in motion, which inches inexorably with every horrifying whooshing stroke...

they pounced on poe's raven

Vincent costarred—or should we say co-sparred?—with King Karloff and "Little Giant" Lorre in 1963 in the AIP (Always Interpreting Poe) production of THE RAVEN as scripted by Richard Matheson.

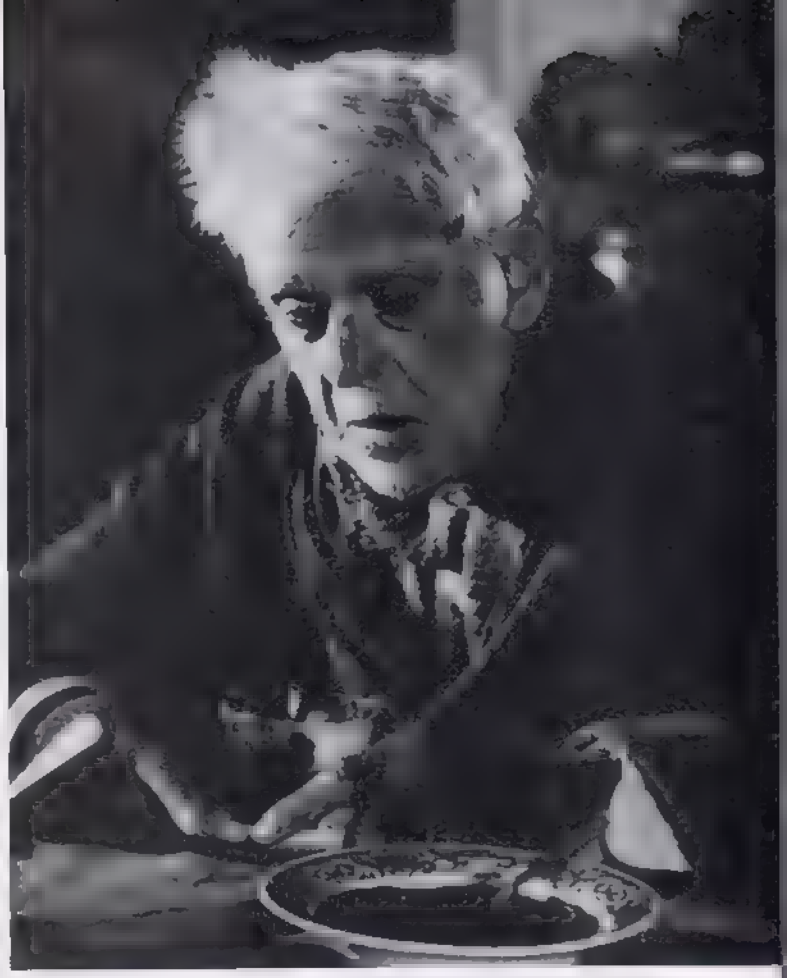
middle-agers in the middle ages

England. The 15th Century. The castle of magician Erasmus Craven (Vincent Price). One dark & stormy night a raven comes tapping at his window and when he opens it (the window, not the raven) the bird addresses him in a voice sounding very suspiciously like Peter Lorre's and informs him that he is Dr. Bedlo, a fellow magician, who has fowl-ly been reduced to this feathered state by master magician Scarabus, a juicy role for Boris six years before his death. Vincent returns Peter to his human form but lives to regret his kindness when he discovers Peter to actually be in cahoots with Karloff, who in a game of one-upmanship is attempting to learn Vincent's special secrets of sorcery. For his duplicity, Peter is eventually reduced once again to avian status. Poe-etic justice, as it were.

the war of the wizards

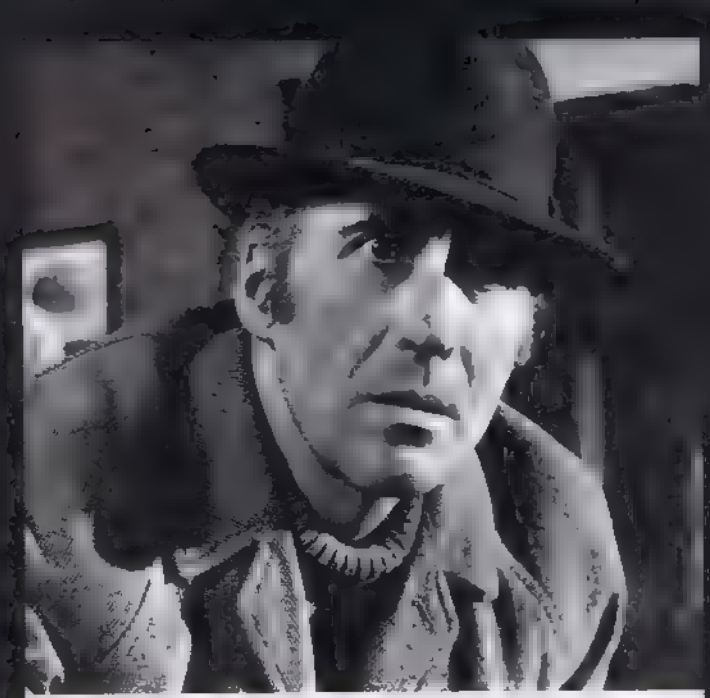
The climax of the film is the black magic battle between Price and Karloff, a classic of its kind, with state-of-the-art special effects for their time. Sort of like, in an alternate universe, having Chaney (Sr.), Lugosi and Claude Rains together in one film. In the 21st century when the "vitrola" (virtual reality machine) has come into play, maybe that won't be an impossibility. In the meantime, check your local video store to see if they have a cassette of this in store: it's worth the Price!

PS: Look for the earliest appearance in THE RAVEN of Jack (WOLF) Nicholson.



Boris on skid row? THE COMEDY OF TERRORS, (AIP, 1964)

Peter Lorre was Janos Szabo, THE FACE BEHIND THE MASK, (Columbia, 1941)

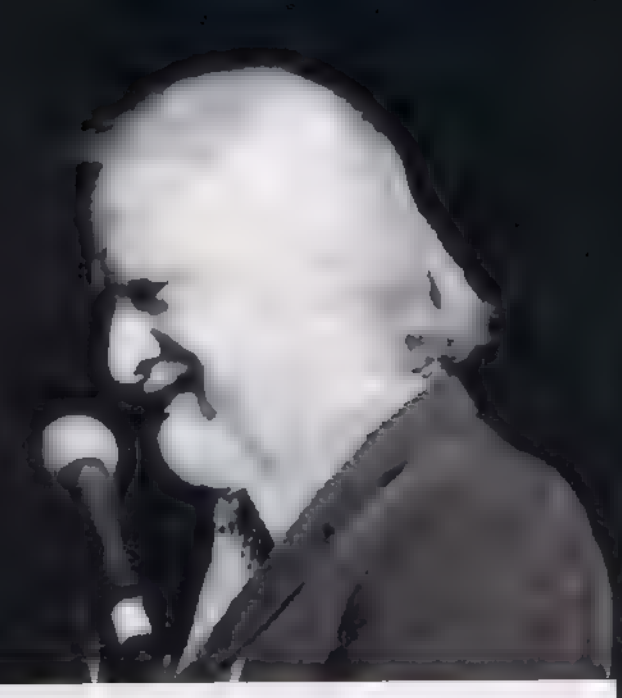


Chris Lee as he appears in DARK PLACES

CHRISTOPHERLEE

recalls an incredibly gifted man...

My last film with Vincent was THE HOUSE OF LONG SHADOWS. That was the first time Vincent, Peter Cushing, John Carradine and myself were all together in one film. I would have liked to have done more pictures with Vincent. In all, we were in 3 films together. The first was THE OBLONG BOX, followed by SCREAM AND SCREAM AGAIN.Peter was in that one as well, although we didn't have any scenes together. I was very fond of Vincent, and had great respect for his skills as an actor. We always had a lot of fun and joshing on the set. At the end of SCREAM AND SCREAM AGAIN, I pushed Vincent into a vat of acid. I play the head of British Intelligence, who pays Vincent off for the mistakes he's made with his experiments. Well, the yellow tinge of the acid made it look like Vincent had suffered some terrible natural mishap on a grand scale, so the first take we did was completely ruined by our both laughing as we fought to the death.Vincent did so many wonderful pictures. THE RAVEN was a charming picture. I would have loved to have been in that. THE COMEDY OF TERRORS was very funny. I remember laughing until my sides ached. Vincent and Peter Lorre as 2 drunken undertakers. Boris as the old man with no teeth. I have a wonderful picture at home, which Vincent sent me. Peter Lorre is playing the piano, and Vincent, Boris and Basil Rathbone are standing behind it singing. Vincent wrote on it, "To Christopher, from three great gentlemen and Vincent Price". I reproduced that in my autobiography and underneath it I wrote, "Correction: Four great gentlemen!" What a marvelous man he was. I shall miss him dearly.



from

RICHARD MATHESON

a friend indeed...

I have a number of pleasant memories about Vincent Price, who, I have said in all interviews, was truly the nicest man I ever met in my days out here in Hollywood, a perfect gentleman and a most genial friend.

I recall one specific incident which occurred on the set of THE HOUSE OF USHER. As a preliminary to the anecdote, I would like to speak of the number of times I saw Vincent talking with visitors to the set. Invariably, he was pleasant and generous with his time and, equally invariably, he always had a little quip to make before leaving the visitors to return to work on the film, always leaving and, just before he went back to the set, we were talking about the paintings of the Usher family by Burt Schonberg, as grim a collection of characters as ever hung on a wall. Vincent shrugged before leaving me and said, "Oh well. They're just plain folks."

The incident took place when Mark Damon came charging into Usher's room with an ax (fortunately, not a real one) in his hand and, after threatening to hit Roderick with it, gave up in disgust and slung the ax aside before charging out again to look for Madeleine. Mark, who I gathered was an advocate of the Method (he used to run in place before a scene, huffing and puffing to work himself up - while, incidentally, Vincent merely chatted with someone and went right into the scene, superior in every way) did not think about where he was slinging the ax and it bounced off Vincent's shin with some force. I heard, at that time, the only epithet I ever heard Vincent utter and, immediately, he left the set and walked around its entire perimeter, in pain and shaking his leg. By the time he returned to the scene, he had totally regained himself and was, once more, the same genial, kind, charming man he always was. To my knowledge, he never berated Mark for what he had done but accepted it as an accident of the game.

Not long before he passed on, I, thank the Lord, had the foresight to write Vincent a thank-you note, in which I told him how I had enjoyed working with him, how I appreciated the quality of his work in the scripts I'd written for him and how I admired him as a human being. Needless to say, even ill and weak, he wrote back a lovely note thanking me and expressing his pleasure at working in my scripts.

What a wonderful man. I hope he enjoyed every pleasure that life has to offer and very much suspect that he did

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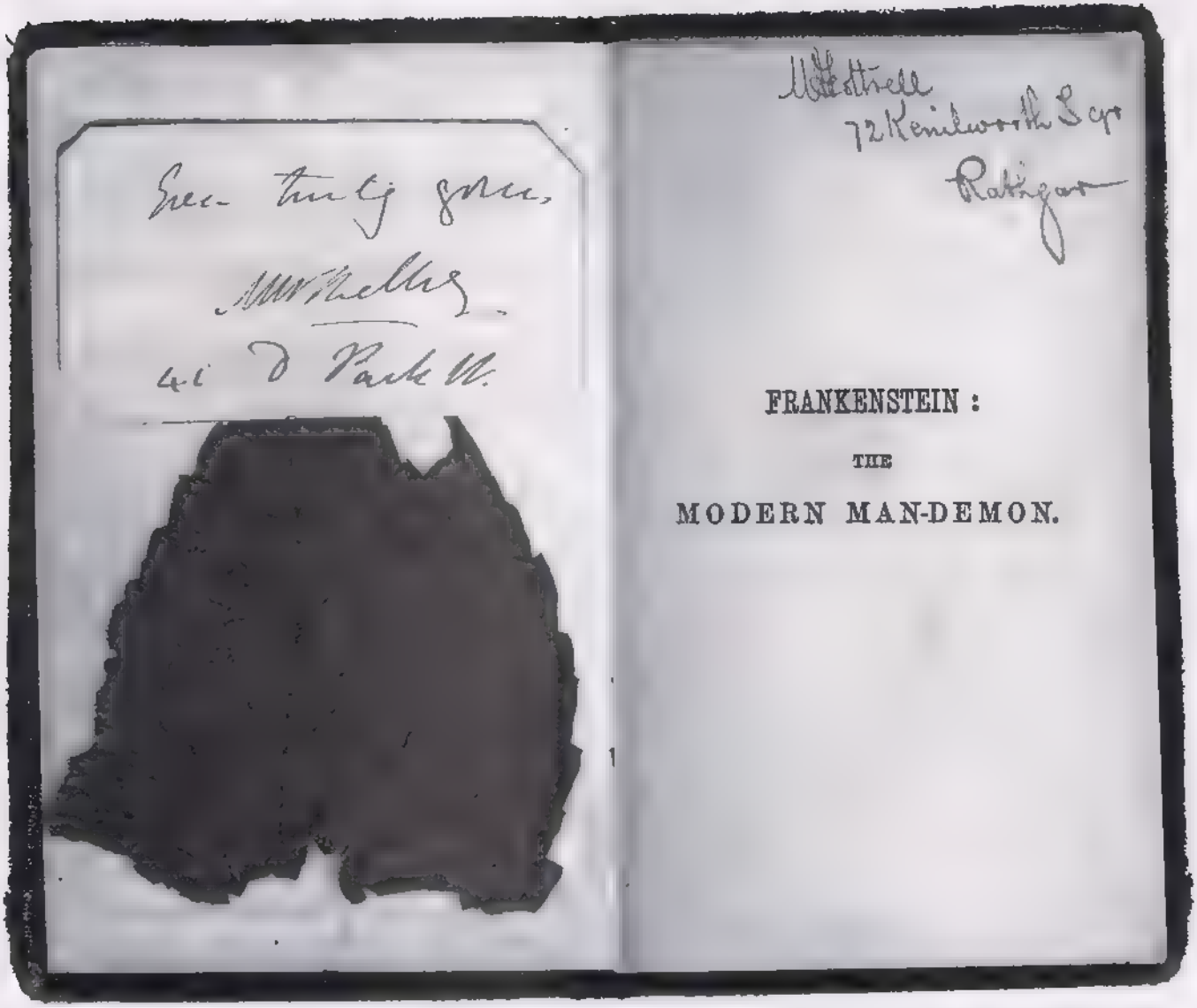
EYE-TRACTIONS of the ACKERMUSEUM

from frankenstein's monster's creator's own hand



Just imagine! If you had lived about 175 years ago you might have written to the address on the upper lefthand corner of this book and got an autograph back from...Mary Shelley! I have approximately 265 different editions of "Frankenstein" in any number of languages (and am still seeking more—also of "Dracula") but this is a truly unique volume. In the 60ish years I have been collecting this title, this is the ONLY copy I have ever secured (or even seen advertised) where the name was changed, as you see, to THE MAN DEMON. Into this unique edition I have pressed on the left a leaf which I plucked from a tree in the garden where Mary Shelley must have sat and ruminated about her ghastly phantasm. In the back of the book I have a leaf I lifted from atop her impressive marble tomb in Bournemouth, on the coast of England.

(Actual book size is 3" x 5", dated March 4, 1877)

VINCENT AS I REMEMBER HIM

by roger corman

I cast him in our first film together, THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER, because the character of Roderick Usher was very close to his own persona: handsome, educated, cultured & sensitive. In the Edgar Allan Poe story, Roderick Usher is a gentle, aristocratic man who progressively descends into madness. My feeling was that the audience should be frightened of this character but not in conscious reaction to his sinister features or brute strength. Instead, I envisioned a refined, attractive man whose intelligent but tormented mind operates in realms far beyond the minds of others, and who therefore inspires a deeper fear.

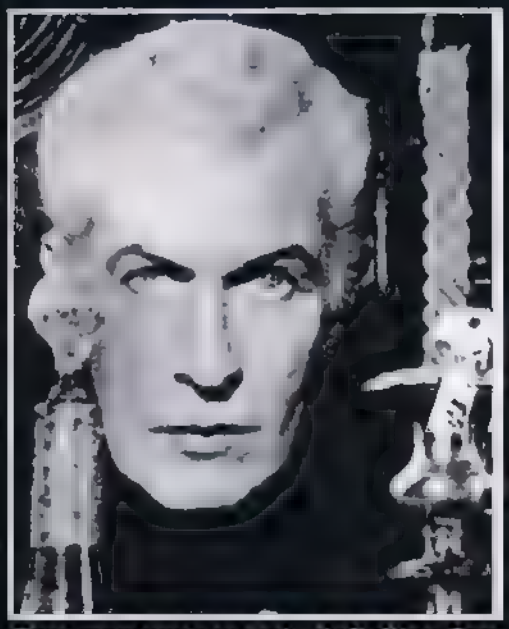
In Vincent I found exactly the man I was looking for.

falling high

Only once do I remember Vincent being puzzled by my film making requirements. In THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER, he was asked to speak the line, "The house lives. The house breathes." He came to me and asked in great bewilderment, "What does that mean?" It seemed that the good folks at American International Pictures, the company providing our financing, were worried that this was a horror film about a monster. To win them over, I had promised that the house itself would be our monster. Now I had to make good on my promise. Once this was explained to him, Vincent said, "I understand totally." He went on to deliver the line with a subtle intensity that became for me one of the high points of the entire film.

adept

Aside from his powers as a dramatic actor, Vincent was surprisingly adept at humor. His abilities along these lines were put to the test in THE RAVEN, a film intended to combine horror with comedy. Vincent's contribution of jokes & comic bits to the shooting script added greatly to the picture's overall humorous effect. On the set of THE RAVEN, Vincent had to adjust to the presence of two veteran costars, Peter Lorre & Boris Karloff, as well as a new young actor, Jack Nicholson. He showed extraordinary flexibility in working harmoniously with Jack (trained in the Method), Boris (schooled in the English classical style) and Peter who did anything that came into his mind at any given moment!



Two men poe-sessed—definitive Poe interpreter Roger Corman found the perfect personification of the macabre author's protagonists in Vincent, begining with HOUSE OF USHER (A.I.P., 1960)

seance friction

Peter Lorre's great talent was for improvising, which he did with great wit & panache. This on-the-set spontaneity did not sit well with Boris Karloff who, nearing the end of a long & distinguished career, expected to do his scenes precisely as written. Inevitably, there was some friction between these two strong personalities. Fortunately for me, Vincent was able to strike a balance in his own acting style, adapting to Peter's looseness but also playing scenes with Boris that were models of the classical approach. His personal graciousness in bending to the demands of two conflicting egos was a great help to me in what could have been difficult circumstances.

the gift

Vincent had a well-deserved reputation as a host & a gourmet chef. I was privileged to attend several parties at his home. The food, the wine, the decor: everything was planned in the most exquisite detail. And he had the gift of eliciting sparkling conversation from his guests, so that it was a joy to sit at his table. I suspect that by inviting me to dine, Vincent was trying to improve my eating habits, which tended toward the spartan back then. In fact, in our film making days he used to joke about sending me CARE packages to keep me from starvation.

There is no question that Vincent Price was a remarkable actor & a remarkable man. His friendship enriched my life, and for that I will always be grateful.

TIME VAULT TALES
Little known stories from the vaults of The Ackerman Archives.

THE FIFTH CANDLE

by cyril mand

Fifty five years is a long time for a 77-year-old man to remember a story he read when he was 23 but I have never forgotten "The Fifth Candle" in the January 1939 Weird Tales, whose cover by the legendary Virgil Finlay is reproduced herewith. (Mr. Finlay was one of the foremost fantasy illustrators of the day. Look for a feature on him in an upcoming FM.)

The author, Cyril Mand, shared a characteristic with another, better known Cyril, Cyril Kornbluth (of "Mindworm" fame): both had somewhat dour, sardonic characters. For a while in the '40s Mand moved among fans of Los Angeles and was, if memory serves me right, a member of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, founded in 1934. He effected a kind of British mannerism about himself so it was perhaps fitting that, when he died during the 1980's, he died in London.

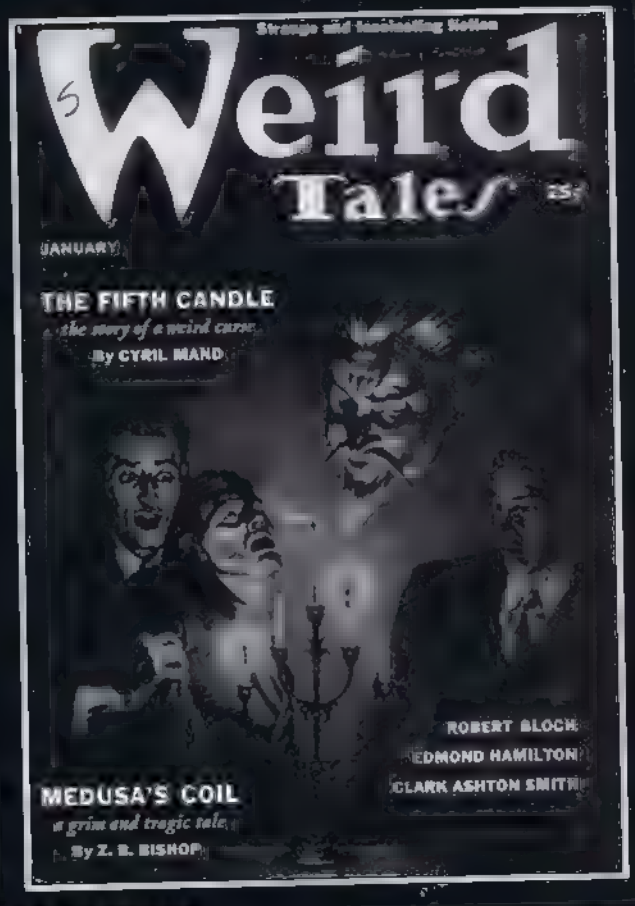
I do not recommend you read this story by candlelight.

—fja

I fled, and cried out Death;
Hell trembled at the hideous name, and sighed.
From all her caves, and back resounded Death.
—Milton; *Paradise Lost.*

Laughable — isn't it? — that one so cynical and unbelieving as I should sit here, quivering and shaking in fear of a specter; that I should cower in dread, listening to the inexorable ticking of the remorseless clock. Amusing, indeed, that I should know terror.

And yet five years ago when we sat at this table, we five Brunof brothers, the way we laughed! The pall of stale, blue cigarette smoke that hung over us was an exotic mask



"He decided that the best protection against the Old Man would be to fight him with his own weapon—the occult"
Original WT story illustration by Virgil Finlay

for the strident laughter that echoed and re-echoed through it. The dim electric light filtered through its mistiness, centering upon the figure of the Old Man at the head of the table, frothing in fury. We were taunting him -- perhaps a little too much, for of a sudden he calmed. His face became grim, almost imposing in spite of the tracks of illness and age. His thin falsetto voice took on tone.

"So be it then! You, my evil sons -- you who instead of filial love and respect have given me affront and irreverence -- you who have repeatedly brought disgrace upon my name -- you who have been profligates, who through your squandering have nearly ruined me -- you who have brought me to death's door -- you shall now pay for your flagrancy.

"I was born in Russia -- not the gay, carefree Russia of Moscow or Saint Petersburg but the silent, frigid Russia of the Kirghiz levels. The knowledge that for centuries has been the lore of these steppes was born into me. Jeer if you want to. My years of study in the occult have not caused you alarm thus far. Let them not trouble you now.

"Look at the candelabrum with its five candles. I die tonight. But every year on this day, March 21, at this hour,

eight o'clock, I shall return to this room to light a candle in that candelabrum. And as each candle burns itself down and flickers and dies, so shall one of you weaken and die. May this be my legacy to you, my evil sons!"

He retired beyond the scope of the haze-diffused light into the black yawn of the hallway, leaving us laughing and hurling gibes at his retreating figure. Later, we did not laugh so much, when we went into his somber walnut-paneled room and found his shriveled body at the desk, his lifeless head with beady eyes glazed in death, pillowed on the crumpled pages of one of his evil Russian volumes.

The Old Man left the house to all of us, together. Because of this, and also of our lack of money, March 21 of the next year found us all, but one, Sergei, seated at the table at dinner. The odors and harsh clatter of dinnertime jarred against the calm placidity of approaching spring. We were laughing again. Ivan, who always did seem like a younger and more droll edition of myself, had remembered the anniversary of the curse. With mock ceremony he had abstained from lighting one of the candles in the candelabrum and had made us leave the chair at the head of the table vacant. Now we sat listening to his ribald jests at the Old Man's expense.

"Be patient, brothers. But four and one-half minutes more," he said, glancing at the huge, gold-handed Peter the First clock at the side of the room, "and we shall be again honored by the presence of our esteemed father. And who shall be the first he takes back with him? Certainly not me -- the youngest. Probably you, Alexei," he grinned at me. "He always did hate you most. Ever fleering him in your nice quiet way. Sneering. Laughing up your sleeve at him and his distemper. And then, too, you are the oldest of us. You're first in line. Boris, why don't you pray for him a bit? A religious cove like you ought to be able to really go to town on his black soul."

"Ah, it's time for our phantom. It's eight o'clock. Hello, Old Man." He rose, bowing to an imaginary figure at the door. "How are you? How's it back there in Hades? You *did* go there. Sit right dow --" His speech died off.

The chamber darkened. A queer, spectral gaze filled the room. It swished and swirled, yet ever contracted toward a single point --the chair at the head of the table. We gazed, stupefied. It became a shape. The shape became -- a man. There could be no mistake. The shriveled figure; the wolfish head with its piercing, beady eyes, hawk-like nose, bulging forehead, and parchment cheeks -- it was the Old Man!

We stared aghast. Ivan staggered back. Boris crossed himself. Dmitri and I just sat, unnerved, frozen into impotency. The Old Man stood up. He slowly extended his fleshless hand toward the malefically scintillating candelabrum on the table. The unlit candle flared into life! His well-remembered falsetto came as of old, seeming strangely melancholy.

"Even as this candle burns down and flickers and dies, so shall you weaken and die, Ivan."

Ivan gasped. Dmitri's oath shattered the silence as he leaped up and reached for the fowling-piece over the mantel. He grasped it and fired blindly as he turned. The detonation echoed back and forth in the narrow confines of the room. The air was polluted by gun smoke and the bitter tang of exploded powder. The candle sputtered, undulated, and flamed on. The smoke cleared slowly. The misty figure of the Old Man was gone. And on the floor, thrashing frantically, lay Ivan, blood spurting from a wound in his chest.

We rushed to him, all except Boris, who stood, devoutly blind eyes fixed on the ceiling, muttering monotonous prayer. Dmitri cursed himself violently. It was a mortal wound. We bandaged him in vain. His life ebbed out with his blood. And as he breathed out his last, the lone candle flickered and went out.

The trial was a nightmare. Of course, we three brothers stood firmly behind Dmitri. Sergei was the real mainstay, though. He saw to the selecting and hiring of the lawyers, and the various other matters of Dmitri's defense. As a prosperous business man, his influence and money aided us immeasurably. Throughout Dmitri's successive convictions for first degree murder, it was always Sergei who secured another appeal and carried the case to a still higher court while the months dragged along. But it was all futile. Dmitri and Ivan had always been utter opposites in character. As a result, they had had violent and frequent quarrels. It was these clashes of opposing wills -- in reality unimportant, but to the world highly significant -- that were now continually flaunted before the jury. At each trial we repeated the story of the Old Man's curse and the part it had played in Ivan's death -- and we were laughed down as liars, lunatics, or both. We only succeeded in making our case ridiculous and in tying tighter the noose around Dmitri's neck. We fought on in vain.

In the heat of litigation we almost forgot the shadow that hung over us too. And yet the sands were running low.

Finally, the inevitable occurred. On January 30, the highest court of the state set the date of execution by hanging for the week of March 17. The governor refused a reprieve. We could do no more. We gave up the fight and went home.

On the night of March 21, a few minutes after eight o'clock, at the same time that three brothers sitting at dinner watched a lone candle flicker and burn out, Dmitri Brunof at the state penitentiary was executed for murder in the first degree.

Boris was really frightened now. According to age he was next to go after Dmitri. He lived in a mortal funk of terror. For a time he turned to religion as a means of escape. The pageantry and ceremonies of the Church imparted to him an illusion of power and protection. However, religion was not the thing for him now. It had an undue influence on his mind, battered as it was by repeated shock and terror; and his inherent mysticism was intensified by it to a stark fanaticism.

His superstitions, too, were magnified and stimulated. He grew into an unreasoning dread of the dark. He became the victim of charlatans and fakes. He spent his money on occult remedies and charms. Any exhibition of seemingly supernatural power awed and frightened him.

And then at a stage show of Edward Rentmore, the English wizard, he went into hysterics. This and the notoriety we had achieved through our evidence at Dmitri's trial were enough to gain us Rentmore's attention. Besides being an illusionist, he had gained quite a degree of fame as a medium. To Boris, whom he now befriended, he was another bulwark against the power of the Old Man. Under his influence Boris became an adherent of spiritualism. He developed into an actual disciple of Rentmore. And finally Rentmore brought his mind to bear upon his underling's problem. As was natural to him, considering his vocation, he decided that the best protection against the Old Man would be to fight him with his own weapon -- the occult. And so, during the time remaining till March 21 Boris and Rentmore were engaged in preparing for the destruction of the Old Man on the night of his appearance. They sat up far into the night poring over the Old Man's malefic Russian volumes. It was in that dimly-lit library that they learned to develop their innate mind-forces. Sergei and I just waited, watching skeptically, grimly amused.

On March 21 at dinner, Rentmore, Boris, Sergei and I were seated at the table. It was eight o'clock. The dim, inadequate light illuminated us feebly; Sergei, white face twisted into a cynical smile; Boris, nervously confident; and Rentmore, his sallow, yellow face frozen into a featureless impenetrability.

It must be very dull being dead. Ghosts are always bothering the living. Shakespeare's HAMLET (here in the person of Richard Burton) contemplates several ghostly apparitions 'afore meeting his doom.

We were hardly surprised when that unearthly mist came and condensed, forming the shape of the Old Man. Sergei and I sat as if drugged, detachedly curious as spectators, conscious of the seething ferment of battle around us. We *felt* that struggle -- mind against mind, will against will, knowledge against knowledge.

Then, as the beat of the hostile wills fell upon it, the form of the Old Man seemed to blur, diffuse, go queerly out of focus. We were winning! My detachedness vanished. I felt jubilant. The shadow that hung over us was lifting. But no! The figure of the Old Man once more took on its sharp, well-defined lines. Inexorably his arm reached out. Slowly, almost as if reluctantly, the candle in the candelabrum flamed up in response to that outstretched, withered hand. That thin statement of doom once more shrilled though the air.

"Even as this candle burns down and flickers and dies, so shall you weaken and die, Boris."

We stared at the candle, fascinated -- not even noticing in what manner the Old Man went. The Peter the First

clock ticked on, its golden hands slicing time and life, slowly and deliberately. The candle burned with a steady, even flame. Minutes passed. Rentmore lay in an exhausted stupor. The flame flickered, danced wildly as some slight current of air twisted it askew. It steadied, then flickered again. For a moment it writhed fitfully, sputtering.

Boris screamed -- a long, agonized shriek. He started up, with one hand sweeping the candelabrum from the table, with the other fumbling at the insecurely mounted light-button. Then, suddenly, he choked, gasped, as if suffocating. The candelabrum seemed to cling to his hand. His twisted face mimicked our horror.

He slumped to the floor, breaking that lethal current of electricity, a grotesque heap of death. The candelabrum slipped from his hand, its clatter muffled by the exotic thickness of the Khivan rug.

Sergei had always been the cleverest one of us. He was practical, and besides his native cunning he possessed a good amount of real intelligence. Therefore, to him, of all the brothers, had passed the administration of our affairs. And certainly he had always done well in this capacity.

Whenever he had a problem, either personal or of business, he sat down alone in a half-dark room and there analyzed, speculated, and made and discarded schemes until he was sure he had the correct solution. It was this that he did now. The day after Boris' death he sat for a long time in the huge, half-lit dining-room, staring with perplexed eyes and knit brows at the candelabrum. It was a long time after I had gone to a sleepless bed that I heard him tread heavily up to his room.

The next morning he gave me his solution as I knew he would. "It seems that just two things are menacing us -- the Old Man and the candelabrum. It is these two things that we must fight against if we want to survive. The Old Man is, of course, beyond our reach. However, the candelabrum --" His hand had knocked over a glass of water. He regarded the weaving track of the spilled liquid. "It is of solid gold and valuable. This afternoon when I go to the city I shall take it with me. At the Government mint I shall sell it as old gold. Within a week, probably, it will be melted down and stamped into coins. The coins will circulate and by March 21 the candelabrum will be scattered all over the country. Then let us see how our esteemed father will take the loss of his precious candelabrum. In his present state he can hardly curse another of the things. Yes, I think we are safe. . . ."

I rather agreed with him. I rejoiced now as in the old days Ivan, Dmitri, Boris and I had rejoiced together in having a brother gifted with that elusive thing -- common sense. I was confident that Sergei's canniness had saved us. The candelabrum was duly sold and, as our inquiries a few months later proved, melted down. Thus with the material threat of the curse removed, our fears vanished. We joked again, if rather grimly, of the Old Man. We mocked once more -- mimicking the Old Man's falsetto voice. We speculated endlessly as to what the Old Man would do when he failed to find the candelabrum when he came to light it -- or did he know already? We laughed again. . . .The days and weeks and months passed quickly, unclouded.

March 21 found me at a friend's house. Sergei was traveling again on one of his business trips, and I had no desire to be present alone when the Old Man came to light the candle in the vanished candelabrum. The day, the evening, and even the eighth hour passed easily. My friend and I chatted, supped, and played chess. Finally we went to bed.

I dropped off to sleep almost immediately. And then -- out of the forefront of oblivion, as if he had been waiting for me, came the Old Man. The black nothingness behind him became a swirling mist that advanced and settled down around us. I was seated at the table. I looked wildly about me. There at the side the Peter the First clock marked eight o'clock. The candelabrum occupied the center of the table. And as the candle in it flared into life, the Old Man's words came to me.

"Even as this candle burns down and flickers out, so shall you weaken and die, Sergei."

I awoke shrieking at the gray dawn.

I dressed hurriedly, rushed downstairs, and seized the newspaper. The front page was smeared with a flamboyantly written and detailed account of a railway wreck. I read it through carefully. Among the killed was -- Sergei Brunof. I looked for the time of the crash, strangely calm now. Yes, it had happened just after eight.

For two weeks I could not bring myself to go to the mansion. Not only was it the fear of that lonely old building with its charnel atmosphere, but also melancholy that kept me away. I knew how sad it would be to live there with the shades of vanished lives and muted laughter. The phantoms of my four brothers and the Old Man still peopled those silent rooms and empty halls.

Finally I did again venture into the dark oppressiveness of the house. And then in the dining-room I received another shock. There on the table where it had always stood before, and where I had seen it in the dream, was the candelabrum. Ridiculous, fantastic, impossible! And yet there it was, its dull golden glitter mocking me! I was stricken, bemazed -- and yet really I knew that I had expected some such thing. So I just left it there.

And so it stood there throughout the year. Every day I sat at the table and ate my lonely meals, watching it cautiously, as if it were a live, malevolent being. I think I went a little mad watching it. It seemed to hypnotize me, too. It possessed an eerie power over my mind. It drew me from whatever I was doing at times. I sat and gazed at it for hours. I mused endlessly as to what strange hands had hammered it again to its old shape, what weird tools had again formed its graceful branches. And all the time it seemed to be possessed of that same unearthly sentience. I could hardly bear even to dust it. I tried a few times to escape its evil spell. I went away -- only to leave abruptly wherever I was, lured back to the dank old house and the glittering candelabrum. I lost contact with all humans. My supplies were sent out from the city by a boy who seemed to fear me as if I were the devil himself. I hardly ate. I just watched it. It seemed the only real thing in a house of mist and indistinctness. Vague and unrelated thoughts crept into my mind. I felt strangely confused and bewildered. It inspired me with an irrational and insatiable longing for something -- I don't know what. I took to stalking the long, gloomy corridors in a frenzied search for the nonexistent.

Today, cold fear jelled my panic into a sort of blunt insensibility when I realized that it was March 21. I sat all day at the table in a dull stupor, staring with dead, vacant eyes at the golden candelabrum.

Suddenly the desire to set this tale on paper came to me. The reaction to my apathy set in. Of a sudden I was full of a nervous, driving energy. For the past hour I have been sitting here writing. I am glad that I have been able to finish in time. The hour for the fifth candle draws near.

Ivan, Dmitri, Sergei, Boris -- they are all gone. The Old Man took them. And certainly he will take me, too. Perhaps it will be just as well if I join them. I'll be back among my own. Dust to dust. . . .

It is after eight already. The candelabrum is empty of candles. I wonder, will he bring one. . .

Bobbie and Vinnie on board the Sitmar Cruise

BOBBIE BRESEE

recalls vincent's fondness for film

In 1975 my husband Frank and I were invited to join the Sitmar Cruise Line to entertain with "The Golden Days of Radio" recreations. (See page 49, this issue—4e)

It was during that cruise that I met Vincent and his wife Coral Browne. Of course they were screening Vincent's films ---one of which was THEATRE OF BLOOD. At the end of the screening Vincent took questions from the audience with such delight and energy that you could tell he enjoyed making the movie

Coral Brown, Vincent's wife, seemed to be the organizer; she was a strong woman, and it showed.

Vincent and Coral had a very dry sense of humor. They were able to laugh at themselves --- they made a good team.

ROBERT BLOCH

recalls a man of lasting impressions

On half a dozen occasions I chatted with Vincent when we met, we were on a couple of panels together and a couple of programs, but regrettably nothing of any importance passed between us. I mainly remember what a warm, pleasant, intelligent person he was to talk to.

(FJA observation: What a loss to posterity that Price never appeared in a screenplay by Bloch. At the present time A. Merritt's classic horror novel "Seven Footprints to Satan" is waiting in the wings to be scripted by Bloch and directed by classy Curtis Harrington. Wouldn't it have been grand if Vincent had survived a few more years in good health and had given us one of his deliciously diabolical performances as Satan!)

Roddy slips a stolen necklace around the neck of his mother's corpse in the Warner Bros.-Seven Arts release of IT (1967)

a letter from

RODDY McDOWALL

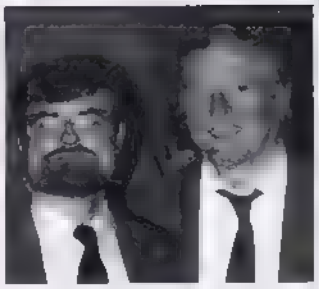
Dear Mr. Ackerman,

Happily, I knew Vincent for 50 years and he was, as you know, a fellow of enormous wit, elegance, and charm. My closest and happiest time with him was during the years he was married to the extraordinary Coral Browne. One night, after a joyous and entertaining evening at my house where Coral had been particularly entertaining, Vincent said as they were leaving, his eyes dazzling with joy, "I always knew something wonderful would happen to me after I was 65." I loved him a lot and will miss his enormously.

a surprise note from

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Loved your tribute to Vincent Price. I knew him moderately well and thought the world of him, as also of Coral.



Price fans Brad Linaweaver (see VP tribute on next page) and William F. Buckley Jr.

five fm fans-turned-pros remember

A PRINCE NAMED PRICE

brad linweaver

Thanks to the generosity of Forry Ackerman, a friend and I sat in the front row during the taping of THE HORROR HALL OF FAME just two short years ago. At the climax of the proceedings Elvira led a frail Vincent Price out onto the stage to announce the winner of the best horror film of the year. As the standing ovation went on & on, Price responded as any grand old actor would, soaking up the affection, smiling at the crowd out there in the anonymous dark. He could have sent a video of his performance, to be slyly inserted for later broadcast. But he insisted on showing up in person.

And so it was that sci-fi novelist Victor Koman and I were both a few feet away from an actor we had admired since childhood, a man whose sophistication & accomplishments made him so much more than just the prince of terror films in the 60s & 70s—he was the defender of imagination for a whole generation. Whether debating with the censorius Dr. Wertham on television (over the supposed iniquity of THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM and THE TINGLER) or co-writing a book about monsters with his son, Vincent Price was an articulate spokesman for the free mind.

He brought class to the horror film during a period when forces of repression could still be cowed by a forceful voice of erudition. This was also when the aristocratic values of the old-fashioned Gothic fairy tale had one last moment of glory before faceless, pointless, wholesale death replaced character in the movies. His portrayals drew from the well of romanticism that never runs dry even in the most cynical of ages. In matters of the heart, there is no progress. Or as Price himself often said, "You learn something old every day."

mark goldblatt

In 1988 I had the honor of directing Vincent in the film DEAD HEAT for New World Pictures. Vincent played a reclusive "recently deceased" billionaire reanimated via a Resurrection Machine designed to perpetuate everlasting life (or "living death").

When Vincent drove himself to the studio for his first day of shooting, he was wearing blue jeans and the largest pair of bright red sneakers I had ever seen. With his genial smile and great good humor he seemed very young at heart, quite pixieish in fact.

We only had Vincent for 3 days of shooting, often very long days. He was always prepared, knew his lines perfectly and was always enthusistic and in good spirits. In fact, as I recall, when we needed to shoot some additional footage, Vincent agreed to do it for no additional fees.

Vincent had many suggestions about wardrobe, makeup and his character that we were able to incorporate into the film. For example his constant breathing of oxygen during his videotaped death-bed message was his idea.

It so happened that one day we were shooting on the very soundstage where Vincent had toiled for director John Farrow in HIS KIND OF WOMAN in 1951 with Bob Mitchum & Jane Russell. Coincidentally, that film contained one of my favorite non-horror portrayals by Vincent, that of a hammy Shakespearean actor who becomes a hero by the film's end.

I also recall Vincent's visit to Steve Johnson's makeup and FX studio. Vincent was there to be fitted for a life mask which could be used to mold prosthetics for use in the film's climactic scenes. I remember him surrounded by an army of talented makeup artists, many more than were needed. They were there to pay homage to him. He appreciated it and he graciously regaled them with anecdotes until the mold was drying on his face-covering his mouth so that he could no longer speak.

Throughout my moviegoing life I have been profoundly affected by his performances. Now, here I was, working with him. Wow! Directing him, no less. This was a dream come true.

paul clemens

As a young child, I was scared right out of my Dr. Denton's by THE HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL. Seen today, thru adult eyes, the film is, in many respects, a classic of camp. Yet the film does cast an undeniable spell, due in no small measure to the suavely sinister, acerbic & highly amusing performance of Vincent Price.

In later years I was to become vividly aware of Price's real range as an actor. But as a lad it was, of course, his mere sinister portrayals that most enthralled me.

At about the age of 7, I had the unforgettable experience of seeing my first big live stage show--the musical "PETER PAN". And in that show--most unforgettable of all--was Vincent Price, deliciously devilish & hilariously horrific as Captain Hook. It was then I was really hooked (if you'll pardon the pun). From then on, like the little boy in Tim Burton's wonderful short, "VINCENT", I think I wanted to be Vincent Price.

He'd known both my mother (actress Eleanor Parker) & father (Paul Lewis Clemens, a painter) & shared common ground with each. Vincent's knowledge & love of fine art is well known and he and my father were equals in that love & knowledge & friends because of it.

After my father's death in August of 1992, Vincent, very ill himself, took the time to send me a touching card of condolence & sympathy.

In the last year of Vincent's life, I spoke with him on a number of occasions & each time the experience became, for me, more painful. Vincent was tired, in physical discomfort and impatient for the end. Never self-pitying in the slightest, he spoke to me quite openly & honestly about his approaching death. "Your dad had the right idea", he said, with a sort of sad matter-of-factness, "old age is for the birds." I believe he used language a bit stronger than "for the birds" but that was the general idea.

His breathing labored, and in obvious discomfort, he nevertheless held onto his humor to the last, & was deeply appreciative of people's concern.

peter michaels

Back in the late 1980s I was doing a cable series in Connecticut titled, appropriately enough, MICHAELS' MOVIE MADNESS. Each Friday night I would run classic Sci-Fi/Horror/Fantasy films together with pertinent documentation & interviews. And each week our own Forrest J Ackerman would be on hand with stories, relics and more puns than you could fit into Cher's closet. I was determined to do a three-hour edition labeled HAPPY BIRTHDAY, VINCENT PRICE for an upcoming May show.

Thus I had the opportunity to talk by telephone at length on several occasions with "Mr. Price" (I could never get myself to call him 'Vincent'). During one of these conversations, while on the subject of the impact he and Karloff, Lorre, and others of his unique circle had on young filmakers, I asked him how he felt about remakes of films, particularly horror films.

"Oh God,Peter, I'll never understand 99% of the reasoning behind most of the remakes," he said. "Why remake a film that you can't possibly improve on? With stage it's obviously different but a movie has its own integrity. Generally, that's the spark that inspires these young filmakers to do the remake and then they *throw out the very thing they liked in the first place*. So what's the point? I've done a few pictures with some of the best actors & the greatest cameramen in the business, and lately they've been remaking them. Have you seen them? Well, do yourself a favor, don't! Talk about horror films!" Are you listening, Hollywood?

nikolas schreck

Once upon a tomb, there existed in the umbrous recesses of post-Kennedy America a shadowy network of youths that constituted nothing less than a cult. The vast majority of baby-boomers was sucked into the mad lemming rush of drugs, electric guitars, the Fab Four and self-righteous "rebellion" of every imaginable ilk. However, the social shatter of the swinging sixties also spawned another strain of creature, far less celebrated than the so-called counterculture. These devotees of the darkling reaches were more fascinated with Poe than with Pot. While the Love Generation turned on & dropped out, the Lovecraft Generation sought more eldritch thrills.

Our icons were made of glue-together plastics manufactured by the Aurora Corporation. Our scripture came wrapped in garish creature covers, punctuated by a plethora of puns accredited to one Dr. Ackula. In those prehistoric aeons before video, we stayed up to ungodly hours to sleepily witness rare TV broadcasts of such films as THE LEECH WOMAN or THE MUMMY'S TOMB. Our cathedral was the worst movie theater in town. There we braved the rancid reek of stale popcorn butter to reverently absorb the latest mayhem from Hammer Studios, American International, Mario Bava and other magic names more lustrous to us than RKO or MGM.

Ah, but what is a cult without a high priest?

Surely, for my generation, no other dark star in fear's firmament shone so brightly black as that suave & silken-voiced connoisseur of creepiness...Vincent Price.

And even when the proverbial well of screen horror roles suitable to the talents of one such as he had run dry, he brought that devilish charm and wit to his other ventures.I recall that in the late 70s in a small theatre in San Francisco, I saw Price portray the great Irish writer Oscar Wilde. The play provided Price the opportunity to wring every bit of doomed melancholy from his role. Afterwards, I mentioned to him that the role of Dorian Gray, Wilde's most demonic character, would have been perfect for him, considering his reputation as an aesthete & an art collector. Price, still in sickly greasepaint and a Wildean wig, laughed & said, "My dear boy, in my present state of deterioration I'd be lucky to get the part of the portrait!"

Vincent is sentenced to the bench where he gets a taste of the Towel of London in between scenes on the set of TOWER OF LONDON (Universal, 1939)

VINNIE, VIDI, VICI!!

comments on his eclectic career by the one man who knew him best— vincent price

interviewed by lawrence french

a fiend indeed

LF: Let's talk a little about Boris Karloff. You worked with him quite a few times, didn't you?

VP: Yes, I worked with him right from the beginning of my career, right up through both of our careers. I think of the extraordinary things about Boris was his gratitude for FRANKENSTEIN. It was something that plagued him all his life, as a good part plagues every actor, but he was so grateful for it, because it gave him enormous fame. He knew he had gotten stuck on something, but he had a great pride in it.

LF: John Carradine said Boris bitterly regretted being typecast as a horror star.

VP: But he wasn't! He didn't just play Frankenstein's monster. I saw him play the inquisitor in Jean Anouilh's THE LARK on Broadway, and he was wonderful. Then he did that whole series on TV, Col. March of Scotland Yard. He had a lot of variety. He was playing macabre things, but Boris was a very peculiar looking man. He had that funny voice and strange complexion, you know, green skin. Of course, in Hollywood everyone is typecast. Look at Robert DeNiro and poor Al Pacino. Robert Redford is just typecast as himself all the time. Everybody is, because Hollywood has no imagination.

LF: It's funny that one of your first pictures in Hollywood was TOWER OF LONDON, with both Boris and Basil Rathbone.

VP: That's right, I had only done about 2 pictures, and I was terribly impressed when I found I was going to be working with 2 of my favorite actors. I had what we call

Vincent as the camp gruesader, Dr. Antone Phibes from THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES. (AIP 1970)

A debonair Mr. Price in an early 1960's publicity portrait. Do you notice an uncanny resemblance to veteran horror star Lionel Atwill?

days of wine and doses

I played the Duke of Clarence, Basil played Richard the III, and Boris played the executioner. We had this scene where Basil and I had to drink for the kingdom of England. Rowland Lee, who directed the picture, didn't like the dialog, and neither did we, because the more we drank the less we could remember. It was only Coca-Cola, but Coke is stimulating too. Well, over in one corner was a huge vat of malmsey wine, in which I was to be drowned. Boris and Basil, knowing I was new to the business, thought it was great fun to throw everything they could into that vat of wine, which was actually just water. You know, old Coca-Cola bottles, cigaret butts, anything they could find to dirty it up, because they knew at the end of the scene I had to get into it! They had fixed a handrail at the bottom of it, so I could dive down and hang onto it. I had to stay under for a full 10 counts, and then I was yanked out by my heels. Well, when I came out I got a round of applause from the crew, but I was disappointed not to see Boris and Basil. Then a few minutes later they re-appeared and were very nice to me. They congratulated me on playing the scene so well for a newcomer, and then presented me with a case of Cola-Cola! (laughter).

LF: That's interesting, because later on you had a drinking bout with Peter Lorre in THE BLACK CAT segment of TALES OF TERROR.

VP: Yes, that one scene of wine tasting was really quite something that has remained in people's minds. Peter and I played 2 drunks, but before we did it they brought in this very famous wine taster to show us how it's done. We enjoyed that enormously; we got very drunk in the afternoons (laughter). Roger really allowed us to comedy it up on that scene. I did it just exactly the way he showed us, but just a little bit more, and Peter was doing it the way they didn't do it, which made it a very funny scene.

burial script with a simple plot

LF: You must have enjoyed doing THE COMEDY OF TERRORS with Boris, Peter and Basil Rathbone

VP: Oh, yes! They were all divine people, with great senses of humor. We used to sit around and say very seriously "How can we scare the little devils!" (laughter). We'd say "Let's do this, let's do that, let's do the other thing." We had a wonderful time. One time one of the big magazines, LOOK or LIFE, sent out a reporter to try and make fun of us. He came on the set and was really sort of grand you know, and then he saw that we were really enjoying making the picture, so he wrote the most wonderful article about the joy we had in making something that was really pure entertainment. The premise for THE COMEDY OF TERRORS was really very funny. It shows you how simple comedy is. It's about a family of out-of-work undertakers. Now what do you do? You kill somebody! So you kill the richest man in town, who was Basil, and you have the most expensive funeral. That's all the plot was.

birds of a feather

LF: It must have been tough for Richard Matheson trying to adapt THE RAVEN into a comedy.

VP: Well, when Boris and Peter and I heard we were going to be in THE RAVEN together we were really very excited, and we called each other up, and Boris said to me, "Have you read it lately?", and I said "Yes", and he said "What's the plot?" (laughter). Of course there is no plot. So we just had fun with it, and sent it up. It ended up being a very funny black comedy.

In 1970 Vincent starred in a one-man, made-for-TV (by the fiendly folks of AIP) special entitled "An Evening of Edgar Allan Poe", which featured Vincent acting out the storylines from 4 of Poe's short stories. The hour long show was directed by Kenneth Johnson, with costumes by Mary (Mrs. Price) Grant. In the photo above you can almost hear Vincent remark "Why will you say that I am mad?" at the beginning of "The Tell-Tale Heart" segment.

LF: It's too bad you couldn't have done a couple of more pictures with Boris and Peter.

VP: Yes, Boris has been gone some 20 years, and I've been around and almost gone for as long. I've always given him credit for an awful lot. He was really the first one, and he had a great pride in doing these pictures. I felt an enormous closeness as a friend, and a coworker, and this marvelous sort of warmth as a human being in Boris. We used to go out to dinner in London, which was wonderful fun, because the 2 of us would walk in a restaurant and we would clear the place (laughter). We never had to make reservations, because we had our choice of any table! Then one time I got on an airplane to go somewhere, and people came up to me and said, "Oh, Mr. Price, may I have your autograph?", so I was very flattered, and finally one man came up to me and said, "Mr. Karloff, I have always wanted your autograph." So I gave him Boris Karloff's autograph (laughter).

funeral with a skelton crew

LF: Didn't you deliver the eulogy at Peter Lorre's funeral?

VP: Yes, Peter and I had the same agent, so one day I got a call from my agent, and he said, "Peter is dead". It was extraordinary, because his wife was that very day going down to get a divorce, and found him dead. So instead of being his ex-wife, she was his widow. So my agent said, "It's terrible; all of Peter's friends are dead. Who are we going to get to do the eulogy?" You know the fat man, Sydney Greenstreet and Bogart, they had all died. So I said, "I've known Peter for a long time, I'd be delighted to do it". Then the day of his funeral I was doing a Red Skelton show, and I wrote the eulogy and I went to Red and said, "Red, you know Peter died yesterday morning, would you mind if I took an extra hour off for lunch, because I'm going to his funeral and read the eulogy?" So Red said, "Peter's dead? We'll all go!" So the entire company went to Peter's funeral, which was marvelous.

me and my shakes-peers

LF: After you did HOUSE OF WAX in 1953 you started to do more and more horror films. Was that a conscious decision on your part?

VP: What happened there was that during the great hey-day of movies there were these great romantic overtones to the pictures, with people like Cary Grant and Garbo and Ronald Colman. Then suddenly in the '50s a whole new group of actors came out, Marlon Brando, James Dean and Paul Newman, who were very moody and realistic. So actors like myself and Basil Rathbone and so on, who didn't really fit into those realistic dramas, began to do costume pictures. This was really the only place we could go on working if we wanted to survive as actors. Most of the things of my later career have been costume pictures. They require a certain knowledge of the language, they require enunciation and a poetic approach to the language. The greatest artist in our language was Shakespeare, who wrote plays! Good ones.

LF: You got to play several Shakespearian roles in THEATER OF BLOOD.

Vinnie actually had two acting careers. Before the world "discovered" him as the merchant of menace, he was well established in the Hollywood of the 30's and 40's as a romantic character. Vinnie loved a good story and was famous for some of his own. He's enjoying one of his yarns with fellows Moroni Olsen, Tom Powers, Director William Seiter and Howard Freeman in between scenes on the set of UP IN CENTRAL PARK (1947), a Universal-International musical in which he co-starred with Deanna Durbin and Dick

first thing, let's kill the critics

VP: Yes, I got to play 8 Shakespearian parts in one picture, which very few actors get to do in their whole lifetime, if they're American. It's one of my favorite pictures for a lot of reasons, one being the premise of it, which is really hysterically funny. You know, I'm the Shakespearian actor who thinks he should be given the critics' award, and instead they give it to someone who mumbles like Marlon Brando. So I set out to kill all the critics, and all the murders are done according to Shakespearian play. The cast of critics was really extraordinary. They were all major actors in England; Jack Hawkins, Robert Morley, Arthur Lowe, who was a great comedian, the late Ian Hendry. God, a lot of them are late now. If we go on long enough we'll get rid of them all. I think a lot of them had seen the DR. PHIBES films, which were very popular in London, and they all kind of wanted to be in one of these crazy pictures I do. It was wonderful, except it was really kind of embarrassing, because I discovered that between them all they had done every single play of Shakespeare's on the stage. Harry Andrews, for instance, is probably the greatest supporting actor in Shakespearian plays. I've known Harry ever since he played Laertes to John Gielgud's Hamlet, years and years ago.

funny girl

LF: You also got to co-star with Coral Browne, who became your wife.

VP: Yes, I met her on this picture. It was funny, because one night I was having dinner with Diana Rigg, whom I happen to adore. I had never met her, but I had seen the AVENGERS and loved her in it. So she said, "I hear you're going to meet Coral Browne tomorrow". And I said, "Yes, I am, and I'm quite anxious about it, because I hear she's a woman with a tongue like a lash!" So Diana said, "Well, you be sure and say hello to her for me, and take down everything she says, because she's supposed to be so funny". The next day when I was introduced to her I said, "Hello Miss Browne, Diana Rigg told me to take down everything you say, because you're so witty," whereupon she shut her mouth and never opened it again! (laughter). After THEATER OF BLOOD we did a Jean Anouilh play, ARDELE, in London, but the English hate Anouilh, and it was not a success. Coral is really brilliant at that drawing room type of comedy. She had also done Anouilh's WALTZ OF THE TOREADORS, among others. We just did a commercial together, which is really very funny. Everyone thinks it's for a fly-trap, but it's for a bank. Same thing.

LF: THEATER OF BLOOD had some very nice locations.

VP: Yes, all of the sets in it were sort of wonderful real places. The theatre where I have my company, and where I lure all the critics to come, and then murder them, was the Putney Hippodrome. It was a great place that was going to be torn down. It had really fallen into decay, and was a very dangerous place to work. We really shouldn't have been in it. There's another scene which has probably the most spectacular set I've seen. When I'm doing RICHARD THE III, I'm about to drown Bobby Coote in a vat of wine, he's supposed to be Clarence, the part I played in TOWER OF LONDON. We shot it in a place that is now a wax museum in London, but it was an abandoned wine warehouse, almost under the Thames River. It had been abandoned for a long time, and had these great drips of water that made these stalactites, and it was pitch black, so it was lit with a thousand candles, which made it a very spectacular scene. You could never build a set to look that way in a hundred years! It's really become a cult film, which is sort of fun, except you begin to feel like a cult yourself.

tennessee, anyone?

LF: Would you like to do any Shakespeare on the stage?

VP: I would love to do some. I'd like to do Prospero, Shylock and King Lear. I'm old enough now, to do Lear. You know, I don't think we do Shakespeare as well as the English do. We just don't. It's their language. I saw John Gielgud's HAMLET 14 times! It was extraordinary. They attack a Shakespearian part, like a piece of music. If you listen to John Gielgud's SEVEN AGES OF MAN, it is an incredible display of vocal and mental acumen. Shakespeare wrote for them, we just borrow it. We understand Eugene O'Neill and Tennessee Williams better. We also do the musical theater better, much better, than the English.

LF: English actors have more training in the classic parts than Americans, don't they?

VP: Yes, it's a tiny little country. It isn't nearly as big as California. It's got 1 major city, which is the major city in the world, London. Everything is done there, and the actors work for very little. There's a theater in London, the Royal Court, which is only dedicated to new playwrights. Alec Guiness, Gielgud, Ralph Richardson, all of them go there and work for 50 pounds a week to do a play by a new playwright. In America it wouldn't happen, because we're all so money conscious. On THEATER OF BLOOD the picture was worked around the schedule of the actors playing the critics, because a lot of them were doing plays in the West End. That's the type of thing they do over there.

the masks of fooey manchu

LF: After THEATER OF BLOOD you didn't do any thrillers until THE MONSTER CLUB, which was never shown in America.

VP: It didn't get much play, but I thought it had possibilities. The stories were very good, and the thing with John and myself, the whole description of the monsters was funny, but the thing was that Milton Subotsky had found some man, who was a milkman, that had a hobby of making masks. Well, he hired this fellow, and thought they would look great, but they're terrible, just terrible! It looks like amateur night. They really should have been wonderful, elaborate masks, that look real, but these look like some kid made them.

LF: I guess he had a low budget.

VP: Well, you have a low budget, but that doesn't mean that! You can still go out and rent them. The other thing was the rock 'n roll music was no good. There were no good names. The stories were excellent, though. You know we were the bridge between the 3 stories.

A young Dennis Hopper looks up Vincent Price—not surprising; there were very few individuals who could look down on Vinnie. (THE STORY OF MANKIND, 1957)

"An apple a day, keeps the witch doctor away" says the Gallowing Gourment in a series of TV commercials in 1975 for the Shrunken Head Apple Sculpture Craft Kit by Whiting.

My, how times have changed! We wouldn't have dared run a photo like this in FM 35 years ago. The mere thought of showing blatant, hard-core SURGERY was just out of the question! SCREAM AND SCREAM AGAIN. (AIP, 1977)

LF: I had to laugh at the ending, when you and John Carradine start dancing with the monsters. You're quite obviously enjoying it.

VP: Oh, yes! We just had fun, but we were so shocked at the rock 'n roll music. I have great admiration for rock 'n roll, but not when it's done badly. My God!

the thriller of it all

LF: Actually, you've been involved in a number of projects with rock stars, like Alice Cooper, Ringo Starr and Michael Jackson.

VP: You know, I have a theory about how I get selected for these things. I think they have based a lot of their stuff on my movies. You know they go out and do the rock 'n roll, and they're all high, and making the noise and flying around, and then they go back to their hotel room, turn on the TV, and there I am! (laughter). Alice I met a couple of times, and I liked him, and he asked me to do it, and then one time I got a call and they said, "Would you come and do a recording with Michael Jackson, called THRILLER?". I said "Sure, I'll do anything" (laughter). So I went and did it, and I didn't think anything would happen with it. Then it came out and sold 40 million copies! I didn't do it for the money, because I didn't have a percentage of it. It was just fun to do. You know to be identified with the most popular record ever made is not just chopped liver! It has really done me a lot of good, because it has given me a new audience.

the gimmick king

LF: On both pictures you did with William Castle, he came up with a gimmick to help sell them.

VP: Bill Castle was a great fellow for gags. I read an article a few months ago about what ever happened to showmanship. Well, Bill was a real showman. For THE HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL Bill had this idea, which he called "Emergo". You remember I throw my wife into a vat of acid; she'd been very naughty (laughter). Then when I bring her out, she's clean! She's a skeleton and I wind her up with the wires. Well "Emergo" was a thing where they rigged the theater with a wire with a real skeleton on it. So when I start to wind her up, the skeleton goes out over the audience. It opened at a theater up here in San Francisco, and they stampeded on the opening night. They knocked out the first 8 rows of seats It was a big success. On THE TINGLER Bill came up with another idea called "Percepto", where the seats in the theater were supposed to be wired for electric shocks. Well, we opened at a theater in Boston, and it didn't work at all. They couldn't rig the seats, or else you had to be sitting in one of the seats that was rigged, and then when the tingler gets loose on the screen I say, "The tingler is loose in the theater...scream for your lives!" It didn't work nearly as well as "Emergo", but remember that wonderful

While still preparing for the dramatic last shot for TOMB OF LIGEIA at England's Shepperton Studio on July 31, 1964, the fumes from the petroleum jelly ignited prematurely and within seconds the whole set was ablaze. Vincent drags co-star Elizabeth Shepherd to safety as firefighters tackle the fire. Said Price: "It was the most really horrific moment in a lifetime of horror acting". Said director Roger Corman: "I didn't even get it on film!"

effect that Bill had, where there's one color scene, when Judith Evelyn turns on the faucets and out comes red blood.

LF: In THE TINGLER you pre-dated Timothy Leary by taking LSD.

VP: I know it. It's crazy. Of course I never really did LSD. I'm very against it. If I'm a prig about one thing, it's the fact that people don't need that. I didn't do any sort of research for that, because I don't think you have to. Even the people who did take LSD, they don't remember what happens to them, so what good would it do to take it to learn how to play a part?

LF: So how did you proceed?

VP: Well, so what do you do when you're a little out of your mind? I just did what I thought might happen. The TINGLER was a pretty good picture, but really the best thing Bill ever did was ROSEMARY'S BABY. He was a lot of fun to work with.

the shadow nose

LF: What did you think of THE HOUSE OF LONG SHADOWS? Christopher Lee told me he thought it was very good.

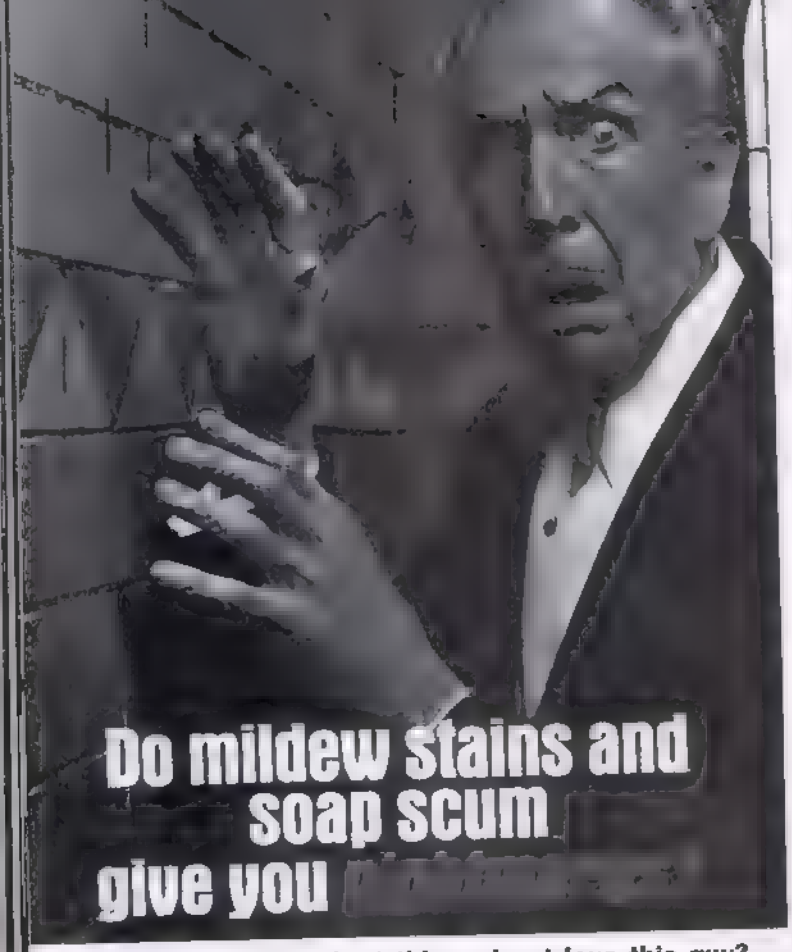
LF: I did too. We all thought it was good, until this woman took an ax to it! It has to be re-cut. I really don't know what she was doing. She called me up and said, "Will you go out and promote the film?", and I said, "If you show the film that we shot," because it's just not the same film. She cut out all of the comedy payoffs of everything. As you know, we were all hired actors to scare Desi Arnaz out of the house, people who just came in to do a job. After everything that happens in the house, Chris getting killed and all the other things, suddenly we all came out to take a bow, and it is revealed to Desi that we were all actors. We had these marvelous comments on all the things that had happened, and that was all cut out. They tried to turn it into a horror picture and destroyed it.

LF: When I watched it on videocassette, the bows you all take at the end are still in it. It reminded me of the Fritz Lang film WOMAN IN THE WINDOW.

VP: That's the way it should have been done, but maybe they put it back together. I think there was way too much of Desi, and it does take too long to get into it, so I don't quite understand it. I don't know if it was Golan or Globus who wanted it to be a horror picture, or what. If they did, then why did they shoot it as a comedy?

LF: Is it true that you were watching Christopher Lee's death scene and said, "I just love to see Chris bleed"?

VP: (Laughing) Yes! We're great friends you know. We both find each other hysterically funny. Before we first met, I had heard he was very pompous, and I was really a little worried about meeting him. It was on THE



How can you look at this and not love this guy?

OBLONG BOX, the first one we did together. Well, we took one look at each other and started laughing. We spend our lives screaming and laughing at each other, and having a wonderful time. I'm really devoted to him. I think he's really one of my few very good friends in the business.

LF: I guess that's one reason why you wanted to do the picture, even if it's not successful, because besides Chris you got to work with Peter Cushing and John Carradine.

VP: Oh, yes, absolutely. It was like a marvelous classic reunion. John is an adorable character, whom I've known for about 40 years now. Peter is unfortunately a little gloomy, because of his wife's death, but he's still a very sweet man.

LF: It's too bad about Peter, because Chris Lee was telling me how he's really just waiting to join his wife, Helen.

VP: I know, it's like, are you kidding? It's very sad. He's just waiting to die, but he's going to have to wait a long time. He's going to live to be 100 years old.

missouri loves company

LF: I read where they recently discovered your screen-test for GONE WITH THE WIND.

VP: Yes, I was doing VICTORIA REGINA with Helen Hayes on Broadway, and they thought I'd be right for Ashley Wilkes. I was playing a German in the play, with an accent, and George Cukor (the first director of GWTW) had just seen the play and came backstage to see me. I said to him (in a southern accent), "Hello, Mr. Cukor, how are you?" Now I'm from Missouri, and I natively have not a southern accent but an accent of that area, but he thought I was putting it on! (laughs). I didn't get the part, of course. I wish I had. I think I would have been better than Leslie Howard, because I never thought he was anything but English. He just was wrong. Everyone else was perfect...Gable, Olivia and Vivien Leigh. It would have been fun.

angel by ghast-light

LF: Later on George Cukor directed GASLIGHT, which was the film version of the play you did, ANGEL STREET. Was there ever any talk of you doing the part for MGM?

VP: The story I heard later on was that they wanted to hire the whole cast of ANGEL STREET for the film, because it was an enormous success. It was one of the greatest hits on Broadway - ever! The reviews and everything were tremendous, and it ran for 5 years. The studio wanted to buy it with us to do it, but the guy who directed it, Shepard Traube, insisted that if they did it with us he had to direct it, and he wasn't a movie director and they needed a big-name movie director. Then Cukor, as I understand it, wanted to do it with all of us - me, Judith Evelyn and Leo G. Carroll It would have been marvelous, because the thing that was wrong with the movie, even though it won Ingrid Bergman the Academy Award, was that Charles Boyer (in the part Price played onstage) was not sinister. He was too charming. You know he's the most charming man that ever lived. I knew him terribly well, and adored him. We did a play together, DON JUAN IN HELL, in which I played the Devil! But also, Joseph Cotten in the film became a romantic interest for the woman, whereas Leo G. Carroll, who did the play, was never that. He was always this peculiar, eccentric little old man who came into their lives and disrupted them. Joe even felt that he was mis-cast. He was really upset about it, because he had seen the play and he felt that he was wrong for it. It should have been an eccentric man, and Joe is not an eccentric man. He is a real romantic leading man.

no killer instinct

LF: That role was your first villain, and I heard that you studied Kraft-Ebbing to prepare for the part.

VP: Yes, you know I'm not a psychopathic killer! (laughter). I had to do a lot of research, so I read all of Kraft-Ebbing's PSYCHOPATHIA SEXUALIS, which dealt with case histories of psychotic murders and all that type of thing, because I had no idea what this kind of really determined, evil man would do. It was fascinating to study, but it scared the hell out of me.

LF: Did that help you later on when you played such evil characters as Prince Prospero or Matthew Hopkins?

VP: Well, Prospero was a fictitious character, but Matthew Hopkins was a really evil person, and it was a true story. He wasn't just a sadist, though! If he were I wouldn't have wanted to play him.

behind the hate-ball

LF: The director of THE CONQUEROR WORM was Michael Reeves. How did you like working with him?

VP: He was only 24 years old when we did that film, he had only done 2 other films. Well, he hated me. He didn't want me at all for the part. He wanted some other actor, and he got me and that was it. I didn't like him either, and it was one of the first times in my life that I've been in a picture where really the director and I just clashed! (twists his hands) like that. He didn't know how to talk to actors, he hadn't had the experience, or talked to enough of them, so all the actors on the picture had a very bad time. I knew, though, that in a funny, uneducated sort of way he was right in his desire for me to approach the part in a certain way. He wanted it very serious and straight, and he was right, but he just didn't know how to communicate with actors. Actors are very sensitive people. I'll never forget one time he came up and said, "Don't shake your head". I said, "What do you mean, I don't shake my head". He said, "Yes, you do". So we didn't get along at all. He was a funny young man, brilliant, but he had a lot of problems, really mixed-up problems, one of them being dope, another being an unhappy romance, and he killed himself. It was a great loss to the cinema, because if he had been disciplined he could have become a very good director. Believe me, this profession takes enormous discipline. You're out there at 6 in the morning, and you're up until midnight and back at 6 the next morning, so there's no fooling around. If you want to last, you're disciplined.

LF: Wasn't he going to direct you and Christopher Lee in THE OBLONG BOX?

VP: Yes, that one, and then SCREAM AND SCREAM AGAIN, but he had this terrible problem of suicide. He tried about 4 times, and finally they thought they had him cured, but when we started to do the costume tests and all the preparations for THE OBLONG BOX he tried it again, and they just said, "He's too unstable". It was a shame. He couldn't control himself and he was on the flip, and then his girlfriend ditched him because she couldn't put up with him. He was just completely determined to destroy himself.

poe-try in motion

LF: He did that wonderful film with Boris Karloff, the SORCERERS, which was really a metaphor for the cinema.

VP: Yes, he showed great promise. He was a wonderful director, but these problems he had. He called me after THE WITCHFINDER GENERAL was released in England, and it got very good notices. It was really a hit for him. He said, "There, you see...I told you so!" It was a mad kind of thing to do. Then when we got together on THE OBLONG BOX, I said, "Well, I think you were wonderful, you made a marvelous picture, now let's get along on this one," but we didn't because he got sick again and killed himself.

LF: Why was it called WITCHFINDER GENERAL in

Vincent prepares to "do in" a hunk of ham during an installment of his 6-part "Cooking Price-Wise" gourmet series for British TV.

Professor Ratigan (THE GREAT MOUSE DETECTIVE) joins Vincent's 75th birthday celebration.

MADHOUSE, AIP, 1974

"I admit the deed. Tear up the planks! Here! Here! It is the beating of his hideous heart!" Vincent as the madman of The Tell-Tale Heart from "An Evening of Edgar Allan Poe"

England and THE CONQUEROR WORM in America?

VP: They just picked a title that they thought would sell. I thought WITCHFINDER GENERAL was a wonderful title, because that's what Matthew Hopkins was, but THE CONQUEROR WORM was a poem by Poe, so they could sell the film as Edgar Allan Poe. I didn't really know where the poem came from, until one day I was rereading LIGEIA, and in it is the poem, THE CONQUEROR WORM, which I had completely forgotten about.

LF: I could understand AIP retitling a film from a Poe poem, but CRY OF THE BANSHEE was a little strange. Poe never wrote a poem with that title, did he?

VP: (Laughing) No! It had absolutely nothing to do with Poe. You remember when they did the first version of ANNA KARENINA, with Garbo and John Gilbert, they retitled it LOVE. It was Hollywood at its worst. They retitled everything, according to what they thought would sell.

LF: At the end of THE CONQUEROR WORM you meet with a very bloody death. You're hacked to pieces with an ax!

VP: Oh, yes, that was terrible! Remember, though, this was a very violent time in English history. The story is set in 17th Century England, during the bloody civil war between Cromwell and King Charles.

mine eyes have seen the gory...

LF: I remember when the film came out in 1968, quite a few articles cited its excessive blood and violence, but it's really tame compared to today's slasher films. What do you think of them?

VP: Oh God, you know I go to see those films, because I know people are going to ask me what I think of them (laughter). I find they have no surprises. They throw so much violence at you that there's no suspense. You know, violence is something you can only have a little bit of. You can't just have somebody ripped apart at the beginning of a show! Where are you going to go from there? They also have no sense of humor, whatsoever! Also, I know how it's all done, so consequently they don't frighten me. I find that some of the old ones that were made with a sense of suspense are far better. You didn't know what was going to happen. The FLY, for instance. When you saw the fly, you only saw him for a very short while. Then you just saw his claw, and there was a cloth over his head. If that were done today, you'd see him in every frame of the picture, eating his food and everything. There is such a thing as suggesting something. It's like nude women. Very few women should be caught nude. They should be perfect if they're going to be caught nude.

fly bawl

LF: I understand you had a difficult time saying your lines in the last scene of THE FLY.

VP: Oh, it was terrible! It was a very different scene than it finally ended up. There was a point where Herbert Marshall and I had a kind of philosophical discussion about what we should do with my brother-in-law, who is a fly with a human head. Now, I don't know how many flies you see around the house with human heads, or brothers-in-law for that matter. But we were playing this scene, "should we kill it? should we save it?", and we could never get it all out, because every time that little voice of the fly would say, "Help me, help me", we would just scream with laughter. It was terrible. We ended up doing about 20 takes.

there's no place like rome...

LF: When you did THE LAST MAN ON EARTH, the setting was changed to Rome.

Like Claude Rains before him, Vincent got the unique opportunity to do a "cameo" in his first starring "horror" role. He went completely unseen in Curt Siodmak's screenplay THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS (Universal 1939) save for a brief appearance at the end. How come invisible men always reappear for a least a moment during the last reel? If they didn't the studios would never get an actor to take the part!

VP: Yes, they couldn't do it in Los Angeles, it would have been just impossible to do. It's based on Richard Matheson's story I AM LEGEND, and it's supposed to be Los Angeles after the atomic bomb. Well, Los Angeles sometimes looks to me like the atomic bomb has already fallen! (laughter). So we did it in Rome, which is as little like Los Angeles as is humanly possible. Funnily enough, the picture came off fairly well. I think it was better than THE OMEGA MAN that Charlton Heston did later on. It had a kind of amateur quality about it. We worked in a studio that was so cold that before each scene we had to go take ice water in our mouth, so that when we talked you wouldn't see our breath, seriously, because it was so cold in Rome while we were filming. It was an interesting film, a very difficult story to make, to really make. It should be done as a great spectacular, you know just buy a city and empty it out.

worthy of an otto-graph

LF: I'm sure you've been asked this a lot, but what would you say is the best movie you ever made?

VP: I think, as a movie, although not necessarily my favorite part, it would be LAURA. LAURA is one of those pictures that is perfect. Not pretentious, very simple, just brilliant, a really brilliant picture. Certainly, way and away the best thing Otto Preminger ever did, and I think Otto thinks that as well. They did a remake of LAURA for TV, and it was a disaster! It was terrible. They shouldn't remake any of these films.

LF: Did you have any trouble with Preminger when you were making the film?

VP: No, I know Otto has that reputation with actors, but I loved him. I did two pictures and a play with Otto, and I had a wonderful experience working with him. Now, I may be one of the few people in the world who like Otto Preminger, but I do.

LF: Fritz Lang also had a reputation as being a task master with actors.

VP: Well, he was, but when somebody knows that much about making movies you go along with it, because he knew what he was doing, and he knew what he wanted. He was a wonderful man, and I had a great admiration for him, and a great friendship with him. The picture I did with him, WHILE THE CITY SLEEPS, came at the end of his career, but he was still a marvelous director.

LF: Would you like to work with George Lucas or Steven Spielberg, in one of the INDIANA JONES or STAR WARS movies?

grimm feary tales

VP: Oh, yes. I would have loved to have been in STAR WARS. Peter Cushing was really marvelous in that. Of course, when you talk about Spielberg and Lucas you're talking about really popular pictures. The whole thing of science fiction, which they do, is really at its peak today. There are things that they know now about the technique

Vinnie & Coral

of those pictures which they never could have done years ago. When I was in Paris at a retrospective of my films, I was so amazed that the French people really have an entirely different view of this kind of picture. They take them very seriously, because the original films done were science fiction, you know Melies and A TRIP TO THE MOON, then later NOSFERATU, which is really in the Gothic tradition. They last, they go on and on. It's really amazing to me that some of these pictures, like the Poe films, which are 20 years old, really hold up. If you look at the history of fright, it is partly a catharsis of a kind. The fairy tales that Grimm wrote, and that are the first thing we read to our children, are much more frightening than anything I ever made, or than anybody has ever made! They were done as a kind of catharsis for children. They take the onus off the parent. I've done a lot of research about this. The child suddenly thinks of the villain as the villain, not the parent as the villain. That's why almost any child psychologist will tell you that this kind of fairy tale is, in a way, very good for a child. I think that some of the films I made were fairy tales in a way.

good phibe-rations

VP: That's interesting, because you never really played the classic monsters, like Karloff or Christopher Lee.

VP: No, not really. The only one I did where I played a monster was DR. PHIBES, but that was kind of ridiculous (laughs).

LF: You played the Invisible Man.

VP: The Invisible Man wasn't a monster, he was just a fella who was unlucky!

LF: Wasn't there a third DR. PHIBES film planned?

VP: Yes, there were a couple of them. One of them was called DR. PHIBES IN THE HOLY LAND (laughter). Remember at the end of the last one we were in Egypt and I sang "Somewhere Over the Rainbow". They've asked me a couple of times, but I won't do it, unless Robert Fuest will do it. He's the only person in the world who is mad enough to direct the Dr. Phibes films. He's a genuine, registered nut! He even looks like a madman. He's all over the place, like an unmade bed. What imagination he has. They were all his ideas.

LF: I saw where George Romero was going to direct a film called PHIBES RESURRECTUS. Would you do that?

VP: I don't think so. I might do it. I'd have to see the script and talk to him.

"you dirty ratigan..."

LF: How do you feel about the scores of your movies? I read where Boris Karloff felt scoring movies got in the way of an actor's performance.

VP: It all depends on how well it's done. LAURA has one of the most famous scores ever written, and I never felt it got in the way at all. When we all went to see LAURA on opening night, Gene Tierney, Clifton Webb, Judith Anderson, Dana Andrews, and myself, we had never heard the score! That was written long after the film was finished. So we sat there and thought, "isn't that marvelous". We also watched ourselves as well (laughter). Sometimes the score does get in the way. I must say, on some of those Alfred Newman scores often you felt that the orchestra was swelling behind you, but nothing was swelling on the screen. For the most part, I think the scores have fit very well. David Raksin, who did LAURA, was really a very good composer. I just recorded a song a few weeks ago with Henry Mancini, who is doing the score to BASIL OF BAKER STREET. He wrote two songs for me. One of them is called "The World's Greatest Criminal Mind", and it's done like a big Busby Berkeley production number. It's a full-length animated feature being done by Disney. It's about Sherlock Holmes, who is a mouse called Basil, and I play...naturally...the rat, who is Moriarty, but he's called Ratigan.

LF: This is the first time you've worked for Disney, isn't it?

VP: Yes, but I've always been visually minded and a big fan of animation, so when they asked me to do it I was thrilled! The thing was, they also wanted to audition me! If anyone but the Disney people had asked I would have been offended. I was really in a state of terror, because I didn't know what they wanted. It turned out to be a very enjoyable experience, because the animators wanted my interpretation of the character. They showed me hundreds of character sketches that had already been done, and then gave me the freedom to expand on that. So Ratigan's personality was based in part from my readings of the dialog, and also from my gestures in the recording booth. Ratigan is really a larger-than-life villain, so I did the part by exaggerating it.

coolman coleman

LF: I read a story that the animators screened your old film, CHAMPAGNE FOR CAESAR, thinking they could use Ronald Colman's voice as a guide for Ratigan, and then they heard your voice and wanted to cast you in the part.

VP: (Laughing) Really? Well, you know CHAMPAGNE FOR CAESAR is one of my favorite pictures. My favorite actor of all the actors I ever saw on the screen was Ronald Colman. I really worship him. When I was a beginning actor, my first movie, SERVICE DELUXE, was a disaster, because I didn't know how to do movie acting. So I went to a woman, Laura Elliot, that everybody in the theater who came out to Hollywood went to, Helen Hayes and so on, we all went to her to study the technique of film acting. It involved learning how to control your face, because when you are thrown up on a huge screen and your

Paw Vinnie gets his eyes scratched out by the black cat setting off the fiery finale of TOMB OF LIGEIA.

face is 20 feet high when you start to talk it can suddenly look like you're eating the screen...and a lot of actors do! So she taught us how to control our faces, so we don't mug, because actors in the theater tend to mug a bit. She was invaluable, and we learned a great deal from her. One of her recipes for all of us was to go and see two actors. She said, "I would recommend that you go and see any film that you can, whether it's a new film or an old film with Charles Boyer and Ronald Colman". So I went to see every film I could, to learn, and I found that Ronald Colman was the master of his craft. He never really eye-contacts anyone, it's always a sort of lower case thing, so you wonder who he's talking to. Then one day I found out I was being cast by my friend, Richard Whorf, in CHAMPAGNE FOR CAESAR, with Ronald Colman. Colman was one of the most charming men in the business, and I did his last picture with him, a little fantasy called THE STORY OF MANKIND, which was a dreadful picture. Someone came into the dressing room while Ronny, Cedric Hardwicke and I were sitting around, and this interviewer said, "Mr. Colman, where did they get the story for this picture?", and he said, "From the jacket of the book". (Laughter). Anyway, CHAMPAGNE FOR CAESAR was one of the funniest scripts I'd ever read. It's about a quiz show, that time there was a quiz show on the air called THE $64.00 QUESTION - $64.00 with no zeros after it! So Colman played this genius who takes on the soap company, like Lux soap or Procter & Gamble, and he gets to the point where it's the soap company itself against his talent. Dick Whorf, the director, was a genuine renaissance man. He was a very fine artist, his brother John Whorf was one of the great watercolorists of America. Dick was a man who amused himself by building superb miniature sets. He was also the set designer for the Lunts for a long time. When I did a production of RICHARD THE III on Broadway, with Jose Ferrer playing Richard and me playing Buckingham, Dick Whorf designed the sets. He was also an actor, and a costume designer. This picture was at the beginning of a not-too-long career in directing, because unfortunately he died. The picture was a big success, but it confused some people because it was so in advance of its time.

devil of a part

LF: You also worked with another great actor-director, Charles Laughton.

VP: Yes, I was doing a play, THE LADY'S NOT FOR BURNING, and he wanted to get out of DON JUAN IN HELL, and he asked me if I would take over the part of the Devil from him. It was an extraordinary experience. I worked with him for about 3 weeks every night after the show, and I learned the part without a single rehearsal. That's not easy to do with 3 people who've been playing in it for 2 months (Charles Boyer, Cedric Hardwicke and Agnes Moorehead). Laughton was a brilliant man - eccentric, peculiar, nasty, funny, disgusting...but an extraordinary man. I got to know him probably as intimately, in that theater way, as anybody ever did, working with him every night on the play.

sinbad & bad sin

LF: You also did several films for RKO, when Howard Hughes was in charge.

VP: Well, working for Howard Hughes was like working for the Invisible Man! (laughter). He used to call me up from Las Vegas on the telephone. That's as close as I ever got to meeting him. For some reason or other he liked me, so he would call me up because he wanted to know if there were any dirty jokes told on the set during the day (laughter). So I'd make little notes on all the dirty jokes that he loved to hear. I had to scream into the phone, because he was half deaf.

LF: Was this on SON OF SINBAD?

VP: Yes. We had 250 girls in that, so there was a lot to report to him. SON OF SINBAD was hilarious. They sent me the script, and said, "What do you think of it?" I said, "I think it's the worst script I've ever read in my life!" So they said, "It is, isn't it?" (Laughter). I said, "Certainly you're going to improve it," and they said "No!" I asked them why they were going to do it then, and they told me they had these girls who had all won a prize to be in a movie, and there is a law that if you offer a prize you have to pay it off, so to pay off all the girls they made SON OF SINBAD.

grin & baron it

LF: I find it amazing that you shot some of your Poe films in only 3 weeks.

VP: It was terribly rough to do, but we had people who knew their jobs. The cast was people like Basil Rathbone, Peter Lorre, and we all knew our jobs. We didn't waste any time. There was no sort of nonsense, of saying, "I can't play this scene because I don't feel it". You felt it, or else you didn't play it. On THE BARON OF ARIZONA we had a 19 day schedule, because it was Sammy Fuller's first picture. The cameraman was James Wong Howe, who was one of the best cameramen in the business, but he was a perfectionist. So everybody wondered if he could do the picture, because he had never done a picture on a short schedule. He did it, though. It's just like the television directors today, who've had to adjust to doing a picture in two weeks. It ain't easy!

of victoria & victory

LF: I wanted to ask you about Helen Hayes. You had your first starring part opposite her in your first Broadway play, VICTORIA REGINA.

VP: Yes, and I had a wonderful experience with her. When I did VICTORIA REGINA with her she was 35 years old, and I was 23. I had done the play in England before she did it, so I had already had the joy of creating the part. She could have really made it very tough for me – you know, a young man coming in and doing his first play on Broadway, with the top star of the day...but she was so MARVELOUS to me. I don't think she is America's greatest actress, but I do think she is one of the kindest people I've ever met in my life. Really, VICTORIA REGINA was the peak of her career. She was wonderful in it, just wonderful. She had been on the stage for 25 years, since the age of 10! It was a great production, really unbelievable. It was the first play ever reviewed in LIFE magazine. Somebody gave me that review the other day, and I was so amazed to find out that this production cost $75,000 to produce the whole play! You couldn't buy the costumes today for $75,000. It had 11 scenes, and I mean scenes. There was Balmoral Castle, Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle. We did it for 3 years, starting the day after Christmas in 1935. I really owe so much to Helen.

LF: When you started out in the '30s, did you ever take any acting lessons?

a method to the madness

VP: I don't think you can teach acting, really. But during the '30s Stanislavsky and the Moscow Art Theater were really a big influence, especially on the group theater, so one time I started to take lessons, and one night I started to play my part in VICTORIA REGINA in a more emotional way, and after the first act Helen stopped me in my dressing room and said, "What's come over you? Who do you think you're playing, the Russian Czar?" So that was the end of my method acting. You know, you read so much about 'method actors' and how they live their parts. My God, if I lived some of the parts I've played! (laughter). It's really a lot of nonsense. I remember Dennis Hopper, who was a method actor, but he had the kookiest method I've ever known. One time I was doing a comedy show with him, and the director was waiting to rehearse the scene with Dennis and myself. Well, Dennis was out around the set spinning around, like a top, and he came up to me, and he could hardly stand up, so I said, "Dennis, what are you doing?", and he said, "I'm playing a drunk," and I said, "Yes, but drunks try to stand up straight! They don't want to fall over". So every actor had his own way of preparing for a part. On VICTORIA REGINA, when I played Prince Albert, I discovered that Albert, who was a German Prince, never really learned to think in English. He didn't like the English very much, and they didn't like him. He always thought in German, so I translated the whole part, and I learned it in German, then learned it in English, but I thought in German. That was a method of preparation, a kind of reality I could give myself. You need every crutch you can get, and all actors have them. A very famous character actor, Edward Arnold, laughed after every line he said. He had one of these great laughs, and people adored it, but the truth of the matter was that he couldn't remember his lines! (laughter).

LF: What do you think motivates people into becoming actors?

VP: That's a good question, and it's something that I think should be written about. I've come to the conclusion that an awful lot of actors are hiding from a self that they want to go away, basically. If you think about it, almost anybody I've ever talked to in my life has thought about becoming an actor, but they don't do it, because of family, or friends, or many other reasons. But basically the actors I've known, and I've known almost every actor in the business, one way or another, they are people who feel that in acting they are getting away from a self that is maybe boring to them, or somebody they don't want, or else someone they'd better like to forget, by playing someone else. I don't mean that they're escaping, it's just a chance at having a double personality. It's really great fun.

ready, set, burn!

LF: I wanted to ask you about shooting in 3-D. You did about four 3-D movies in the '50s.

VP: Yes, I did the first major 3-D picture, HOUSE OF WAX, and because we had to shoot with 2 cameras, to get the 3-D effect, I had to do all my own stunts. It's not fun, because in one scene I had to run under a falling balcony, which was 2000 pounds of steel and timber, and this damn set caught on fire! You know, it was filmed at Warner Bros. lot, and at that time there had been several fires on the lot and everybody was a little suspicious that Jack Warner wanted to build a new studio. So during this scene in HOUSE OF WAX, when the museum catches on fire, we all thought Mr. Warner was going to collect on his insurance, but he didn't because they put it out.

LF: One of your early films, DRAGONWYCK, featured some very nice sets for that house.

VP: Yes, that was a beautiful set by Lyle Wheeler, built right on the stage at Fox. It was a wonderful house, you could have moved right in, except they tore it down a week after we finished shooting. The exterior of the house was a glass shot, but the interior was a complete house. The only other picture I did which had as complete an interior set was WILSON, which was about President Wilson. They reproduced the White House, but it was hysterical because the famous blue room was reproduced exactly, but it didn't photograph blue. It was in the early days of technicolor, so they had to do it all over.

ruddy gore

LF: I see that you do some singing in RUDDIGORE (or THE WITCHES CURSE), which was just shown on PBS.

VP: That was great fun. It was really a challenge, but I started out as a singer. I was with the glee club at Yale, and I took singing lessons in Vienna, but I stopped singing because I always had this terrible fear that the orchestra would win out, and they always did. I love music, though, and the marvelous thing about doing RUDDIGORE was that it was pre-recorded, so there was no chance of the orchestra winning while I was there - they had already won, before I got there. I'm not really a singer, I just fake it, but I've done a lot of musical-comedy. I've done OLIVER, PETER PAN, and I sang in VICTORIA REGINA. I did a musical on Broadway, which was a very good show written by Jules Styne, called DARLING OF THE DAY. It got very good notices, but it was at a time when GREASE and HAIR and all those shows were really popular, and this was just a nice old-fashioned musical comedy and the public didn't go for it.

Vincent with character actor in the *original* HORROR HALL OF FAME in 1974. Unseen for 20 years, it is now being prepared for home video release through Dynacomm this October. Don't miss FM #204 (October) for ordering information. (below) As Prospero, Vincent was pure evil corrupting the innocence of Jane Asher in MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH in one of four multi-colored chambers as described in Poe's story.

Vinnie as he appeared in the "Pit and the Pendulum" segment of "An Evening of Edgar Allan Poe".

art with heart

LF: Perhaps we could end-up with a bit about your interest in art.

VP: You know, I have a theory that art is everything. I think that we tend to departmentalize the arts in America. We say that theater is an art, movies is an art, if we admit they are an art at all, and we say art is hand painted oil on canvas. Then we forget about Architecture and poety and dance. But people who are in the theater should remember that the theater is the mother of the arts. It cannot exist without sets, without music, without acting and particularly without writing.

LF: That applies to movies as well, only more so.

VP: Yes, I have a great admiration for the motion picture as a profession. I think it's a great art form. It's something that is more identifiable with America probably than anything else. Other countries make magnificent pictures, too, but it is a very American thing, movies. This is what people think about us.

LF: One final question. In HOUSE OF USHER you gave a history of the Usher family through a series of canvas portraits of your ancestors. Did you have anything to do in selecting the artist?

VP: No. A lot of people ask me that, because I'm very into the art thing, but the boy who did them (Burt Schonberg) was a friend of Roger's, so he got him to come down and do them. I thought they were really very good. If they had been just regular, naturalistic portraits, it wouldn't have come off.

LF: They reminded me of Norwegian painter Edvard Munch.

VP: Exactly. He captured that Poe feeling of agony and anxiety. Roger didn't know anyone talented enough to do them in a naturalistic style, so he went the other way and let this fella have free reign of what he thought the portraits of Roderick Usher's ancestors would have been. I liked them.

Vincent Price recited the following verses for the film VINCENT by Tim Burton and Rick Heinrichs

(printed here exclusively for FM readers courtesy of Tim Burton)

Vincent Malloy is seven years old
He's always polite and does what he's told

For a boy his age he's considerate and nice,
But he wants to be just like Vincent Price.

He doesn't mind living with his sister, dog and cats,
Though he'd rather share a home with spiders and bats.

There he could reflect on the horrors he's invented
And wander dark hallways alone and tormented

Vincent is nice when his aunt comes to see him,
But imagines dipping her in wax, for his wax museum

He likes to experiment on his dog, Abacrombie,
In the hopes of creating a horrible zombie,

So he and his horrible zombie dog
Could go searching for victims in the London fog

His thoughts though aren't only of ghoulish crime
He likes to paint and read, to pass some of the time.

While other kids read books like 'Go, Jane, Go',
Vincent's favorite author is Edgar Allan Poe.

One night while reading a gruesome tale
He read a passage that made him turn pale

Such horrible news he could not survive,
For his beautiful wife had been buried alive

He dug out her grave to make sure she was dead,
But what he really dug up was his mother's flower bed

His mother sent Vincent off to his room
He knew he'd been banished to the Tower of Doom,

Where he was sentenced to spend the rest of his life
Alone with the portrait of his beautiful wife

While alone and insane and encased in his tomb,
Vincent's mother burst suddenly into the room

She said, "If you want to you can go out and play,
It's sunny outside and a beautiful day".

Vincent tried to talk, but he just couldn't speak
The years of isolation had made him quite weak.

So he took out some paper and scrawled with a pen,
"I am possessed by this house and can never leave it again"

His mother said, "You're not possessed and you're not almost dead
These games that you play are all in your head"

"You're not Vincent Price, you're Vincent Malloy,
You're not tormented or insane, you're just a young boy"

"You're seven years old, and you're my son.
I want you to get outside and have some real fun"

Her anger now spent, she walked out through the hall,
And while Vincent backed slowly against the wall

The room started to sway, to shiver and creak
His horrid insanity had reached its peak

He saw Abacrombie his zombie slave
and heard his wife call from beyond the grave

She spoke from her coffin and made ghoulish demands,
While through cracking walls reached skeleton hands.

Every horror of his life that had crept through his dreams
Swept his mantle after terrified screams

To escape the madness he reached for the door,
But fell limp and lifeless down on the floor

His voice was soft and very slow
as he quoted "The Raven" from Edgar Allan Poe

"And my soul from out that shadow That lies floating on the floor
Shall be lifted--nevermore!"

Director Tim Burton with the stars of his incredible Caligarish cinemachievement of last year THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

TIM BURTON REMEMBERS

vincent as a guiding light

If there was an image that helped me through my early life, it was Vincent Price. For some reason I was always likening the Edgar Allan Poe movies to my own life. Vincent was like my psychologist. He helped me get through the abstractions of those early years. The characters he played (Roderick Usher, Nicolas Medina, Verden Fell) would always go through some grand, dark catharsis. Vincent was usually plagued by some sort of abstract demons, was overly sensitive, and on the verge of insanity. I found I could relate to that in a very meaningful way. Those kinds of stories were my form of therapy. His characters really spoke to me. In the same way that when you read fairy tales you get a real visceral response, well that happens with the Poe films. You get a real emotional response. That's what I really loved, that extreme imagery that was really symbolic for something else. Later I did some drawings for a children's book, which eventually became VINCENT, my first short film. Vincent Price was the first person I really met from Hollywood, and he turned out to be such a wonderful guy. Just incredible! He was interested in all sorts of things, and he gave me a great deal of hope when I was starting out. He was a tremendous inspiration to me. Vincent really shaped my early life. Then, when he played the inventor in EDWARD SCISSORHANDS it gave the part an emotional weight that made it very strong for me. If you look at all the movies he's done, you see he has such fun with them. He so obviously enjoys what he's doing, that it can't help but be a little contagious to the audience.I was lucky to film a little conversation with Vincent, which we did in his art gallery at East L.A. College. He donated this incredible art collection for the students to look at, and I found that to be one of the most admirable things you could do. You know, most people who do something like that splash it all over the place, but Vincent didn't make any big hoopla about it. He just did it, and I found that pretty special. Everybody has someone they admire. For me it was an actor named Vincent Price.

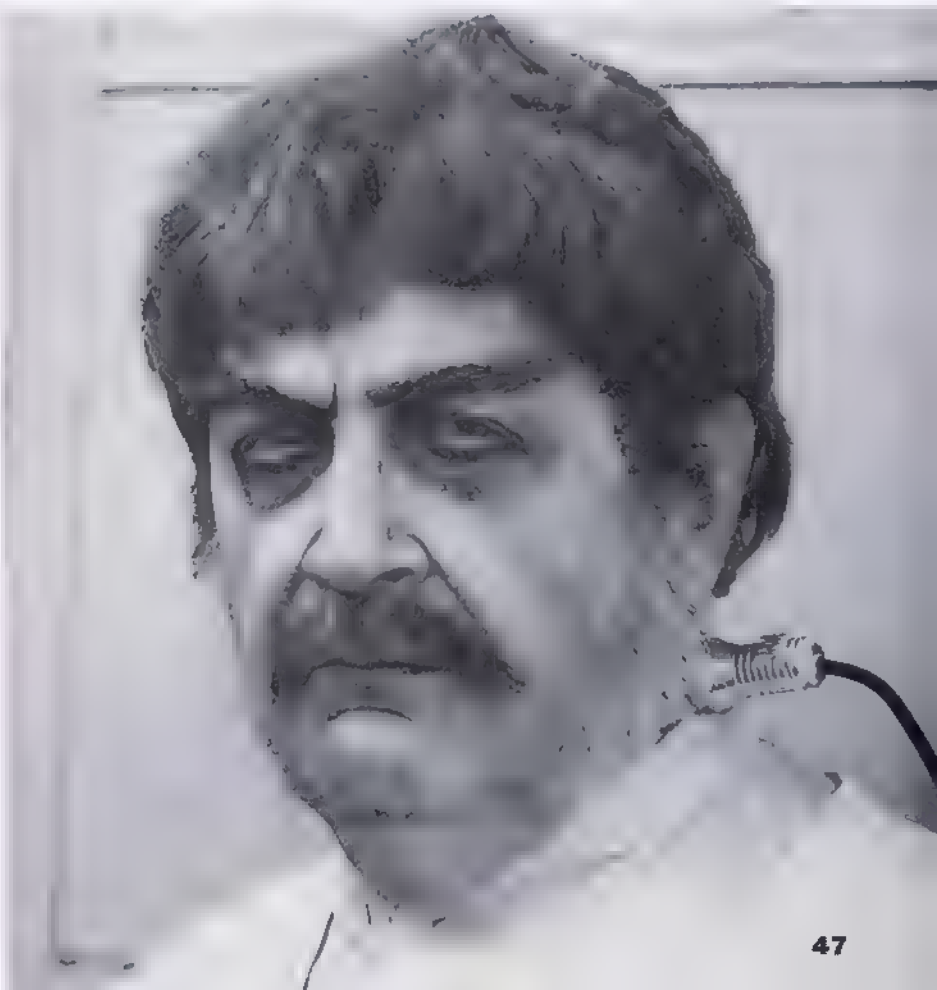
YOU AXED FOR IT!

Got a particular favorite film or fiend you'd like to see featured in FAMOUS MONSTERS? Good 'ol Dr. Acula would love to sink his fangs into your request.

Address your suggestion to:
FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND,
Dept. UX4-203, POB 9669
N. Hollywood, CA 91609.

The founding father of our favorite imagi-movie studio and the man who instructed his staff to provide a young and enthusiastic Forry Ackerman "anything this kid wants" in response to Forry's 62 letters of correspondence, celebrates his birthday with a few friends. Quick—how many of these famous faces can you identify? Drop us a note with your observations. Consider this a sort of "bonus" mystery photo for those who think our featured one on page 53 is too easy.

Tens of thousands of fantasy film aficianados go ape over the stop-motion masterpieces by animagician Ray Harryhausen. As if his incredible modelmaking, design, motion analysis, lighting, composition, camerawork, dramatic flair, sense of humor, acting (that's Ray's soul you see up there on the screen in the persona of his creations), ad infinitum, talents weren't enough, he is also a gifted sculpter (he'll hand-make a magnificent bronze King Kong for you on order. The cost? A steal at $10,000 dollars!) and a gifted artist. Above is a preliminary concept sketch for JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS. (Since his men nobly followed him without question, shouldn't it be retitled JASON AND THE ARGUE-NOTS?)



Captain Kangaroo after a night painting the town? No, it's the abominable Uncle Forry in the guise of the abominable Dr. Phibes!

Extremely rare photo of Kharis from the 2000 B.C. edition of the Caeser's & Roebuck catalog showing the latest thing for keeping cool on those hot Nile nights. (THE MUMMY'S HAND, Universal, 1940, with Tom Tyler taking the wrap)

SOUNDS OF THE IMAGI-NATION
A new FM series exploring the astounding age of horror, mystery, and suspense radio

SUSPENSE!

by **FRANK BRESEE**

Among the many facets of his career, Vincent was no stranger to the first arena of broadcast theater—radio. During the Golden Days of Radio, he was a guest on "The Rudy Vallee Hour", "Hollywood Star Playhouse", "Family Theatre" and others. He also guested on some of the top comedy shows, including "The Jack Benny Show", "The Sealtest Village Store", with Jack Haley and "Duffy's Tavern" with Ed Gardner.

During World War II, Vincent appeared on many of the Armed Forces Radio Service shows, including "Command Performance".

For 5 years, from July 9, 1947 to June 24, 1951, he was the star of the radio detective program "The Saint" (in the Simon Templar role that later propelled young Roger Moore to stardom in the TV series).

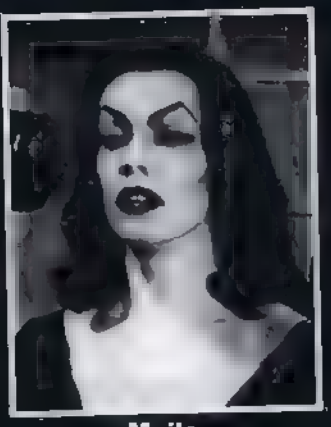
The first time I met Vincent was on December 2, 1948 at a dress rehearsal of the popular radio show SUSPENSE. During a break I shot the photograph you see here of him at the CBS microphone. (The SUSPENSE show was "The Hands of Mr. Ollermole".) I present it here exclusively for all you AM (and FM) radio fans.

Radio historian Frank Bresee is heard on his own weekly program "The Golden Days of Radio" broadcast around the world on the Armed Forces Radio Network. The program is also heard daily in the United States on the Yesterday USA Satellite Superstation. Frank has a long and distinguished career as a radio performer and producer. He has worked with many of the greats of fantasy films. —pub.

RSVILLE... HEADLINES FROM

MAILA IN WONDERLAND

The Ackermonster recently hosted the original terror-vision hostess Vampira (Maila Nurmi) in the Ackermansion for a TV interview by a crew from her homeland, Finland. Maila, a relative of Nurmi the famous Olympic Champion of yesteryear, will soon be seen portrayed in Tim Burton's biopic ED WOOD. Maila will always be remembered as the wasp-waist weird woman of PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE. She has recently taken to painting portraits of herself in character, one of which now graces our editor's office.



Maila

FORREST FIRE

FJA was recently chauffered in a limo with Ann Robinson, star of WAR OF THE WORLDS, to the nearby city of Santa Clarita where the pair were celebrity presenters of awards for best amateur movies made by students at the local high school. (All this attention and what's he got to chauffer it?) Forry presented a fine plaque and $100 to the creators of TRIASSIC: THE OTHER PARK, an 8-minute top-motion dinosaur film following in the footsteps of Willis O'Brien and Ray Harryhausen. A "production" was made of Forry's appearance as a smoke-bomb was exploded in total darkness and when the lights went up, Forry materialized from a puff of smoke and was led to the podium by a pair of mini-aliens, young students in spacemen's costumes and monster masks.

Ann

DE-VIN-ATIVE WORKS IN PROGRESS

This Fall, 20th Century-Fox will release the long awaited documentary "Conversations With Vincent", a 65-minute personal homage by BATMAN director, Tim Burton. 1995 will see the publication of The Films of Vincent Price, a comprehensive retrospective in the popular Citadel Press star "filmography" series, written by long-time VP friend and collector Lucy Chase Williams.

THE REEL FORRY

Hours before the catastrophic January 17 earthquake, Forry completed his 46th cameo in Fred Olen Ray/Jim Wynorski's BIKINI DRIVE-IN. (At last the truth surfaces. Must have been one heck-of-a performance!) And, on the subject of cameos, Imagi-moviegoers checking out John Landis' new Eddie Murphy hit, BEVERLY HILLS COP III will spot the oddest couple of characters ever seen to guzzle down brandy (apple juice) in a bar— yep, that's FORREST J ACKERMAN and RAY HARRYHAUSEN! (Wait till the Temperence League hears about this!)

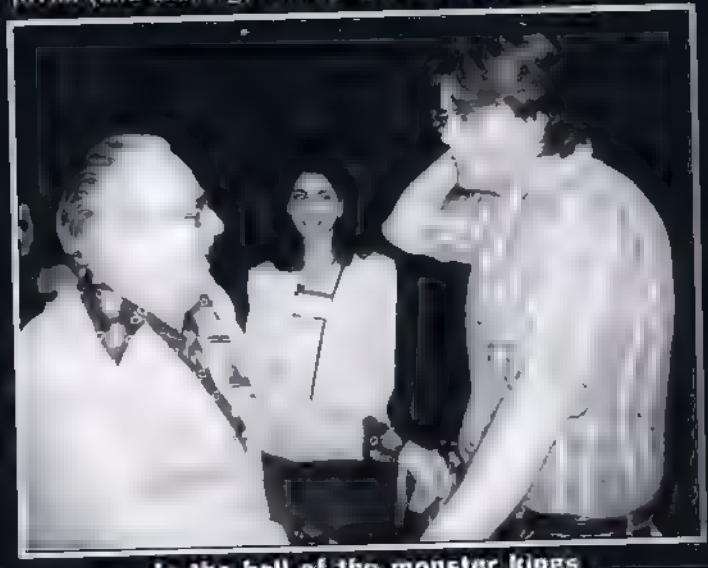
FAN-DAMONIUM

Forry has written a 7500 word introduction to a hardcover volume of adult fantasy, "The Hot Blood Series: Deadly After Dark", while "Radical Robert" Carter, the 7-year-old boy to whom the last issue was dedicated, has completed the 6th issue of his fanzine, "Awful Munsters", for the Ackerman Archives. Robert and his monster mentor, Uncle Dan, spent the better part of a whole day at the FAMOUS MONSTERS booth with Uncle Forry at Drew Sanchez' HORRI-FI Collectibles Show in Glendale, CA over the June 11-12 weekend. Also on hand were Sara Karloff and hubby "Sparky" Sparkman, Bela Lugosi Jr., Ron Chaney, Ann Robinson, official Gene Roddenberry biographer Dave Alexander, Gunner Hansen, Coffin Joe, and a rare appearance by the lovely and legendary Barbara Steele.

Barbara

CROWNING MOMENT

It was horror-heaven for visitors to the FM table in the celebrity autograph room during the Saturday festivities of the American Booksellers Association Trade Show at the Los Angeles Colliseum, when Stephen King, who was on his way out of the building after completing over an hour of attention to a sold-out line of autograph seekers, spotted one of his favorite celebrities, Forrest J Ackerman, who was busy tending to his own lengthy line of fans, and strolled over for a chat. King was delighted with the appearance of "The Killer", which debuted in the last issue of FM after some 25 years on the shelf. Ol' Uncle Forry presented King with a pre-dated (to 1966) author's check for $25 while cautioning him not to blow it all on comic books! Also on hand in the "green room" was a jovial (and dashing) Kirk (SATURN 5) Douglas.



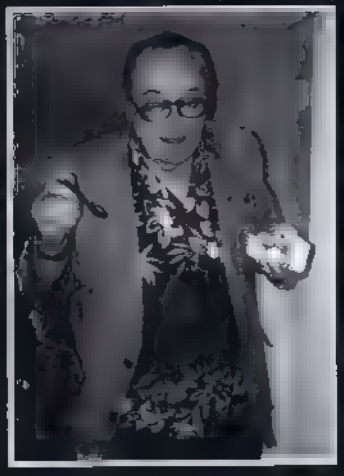
In the hall of the monster kings

RSVILLE... HEADLINES FROM

HORRORSVILLE... HEADLINE

HARPY BRRRTHDAYS

The 9th & 10th of April were the natal dates respectively of FM's publisher, Ray Ferry and his Assistant, Gene Reynolds. A grand party was celebrated at the headquarters of FM. Among the participants (who decimated the twin cakes, one with a Superman motive, the other Dinosaurs) were Angus "The Tall Man" Scrimm, Ann (WAR OF THE WORLDS) Robinson, Mark (PUMPKINHEAD) Carducci, Forry, Bobbie (Beauty) and the Beast (hubby Frank), Risty (a mysterious mono-named figure in local fanta-film circles), Eric (The Answer Man) Hoffman, Bill (co-builder of the reborn Metropolis robotrix and owner of Robby the Robot) Malone, and FM's very own trans-crypt-er, Janet Malley. Between Ray and Gene, their combined years added up to 90—almost as many as Uncle Forry.



The Ice (Cream) Man Cometh

SPEAKING OF VAMPIRES

Robert Eighteen-Bisang, publisher of Transylvania Press, Inc., has done FJA the signal honor of presenting him with the first copy off the press of his impressive debut publication, "Dracula: the rare text of 1901". Forry has over 250 different editions of "Dracula", foreign editions & spinoffs, but says he was unaware of the special 1901 edition. It has been reproduced on beautiful stock in a limited boxed edition of 500, enhanced by a fascinating forward by Mr. Eighteen-Bisang and an equally interesting introduction by well-known vampirologist Raymond T. McNally. Interested parties may contact the publisher at POB 848, 250 "H" Street, Blaine, WA. 98231-2107.

FRANK 'N' KING

Speaking of King, so enthusistic is Stephen King over Frank(enstein) Darabont's direction of his "Rita Hayworth" story that he has given Hollywood's hottest new director the green light to film his short horror story "The Mist", which Darabont characterizes as "one of the most chilling stories ever written." And Frank should know...he's been reading 'em ever since he was knee-high to an early issue of FAMOUS MONSTERS.

Frank

THINK BRINKE

Scream Queen Brinke Stevens is branching out in several directions. She has a comic book featuring her and is working on a routine to be a hostess on a Showtime series. In fact she has so many irons in the fire she regrettably couldn't find the time to fit in between her other writing commitments a written-to-order original first person story for the anthology "I, Vampire", whose contributors will include FM graduate Bill Warren, Henry Kuttner, Andre Norton, William F. Nolan and Fritz Leiber, among others. Sorry our favorite vamp couldn't oblige with a story but we're glad you're keeping so busy in the genre, Brinke.

4E & Brinke—Creature Feature's featured creatures

HUGH ASKED FOR IT

Having definitively covered the subject of dinosaurs, Stephen Jones, an anthology king of England, has now turned his attention to the definitive Frankenstein still fotos book. FJA and Ron Borst have cooperated, making their files available for his selection. Hugh Hefner, incidentally, was so impressed with Ron's monumental volume "Graven Images" that he invited Ron to the Playboy Mansion to view a private showing of the original NOSFERATU. They got along so well that he's been periodically invited back. Ron says they enjoy chatting together about old fantasy films just like a couple of fans.

Ron

SCANDAL IN HORRORWOOD

This is not a hoax, readers, it is a deadly serious, tragic matter: word has spread like wildfire around town of vandalism in the shrine in Hollywood Cemetery dedicated to Rudolph Valentino. There in an alcove was also an urn with the ashes of an actor of extreme importance to us aficianados of horror films. The alcove containing the mortal remains of PETER LORRE has been reported to be empty. A theft of his urn is a despicable act of callous fanaticism. We hope the thief is not a reader of FAMOUS MONSTERS but if, regrettably, he or she should see this notice, we wish they would be shamed into returning it to its rightful place. Celia Lovsky, who was the last love of Peter Lorre, visited his urn daily till the time of her demise, and we should think that the perpetrator should be worried about being haunted by Lovsky, who certainly would not look kindly upon such a desecration. We hope we can bring you news in our next issue of a satisfactory conclusion to this disgrace.

HORRORSVILLE... HEADLINE

THE FILMS OF VINCENT PRICE

Demure, debonaire. diabolical, demented—but always a prince of players.

"Service De Luxe" (1938)
"The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex" (1939)
"Tower of London" (1939)
"The Invisible Man Returns" (1940)
"Green Hell" (1940)
"The House of the Seven Gables" (1940)
"Brigham Young - Frontiersman" (1940)
"Hudson's Bay" (1941)
"The Song of Bernadette" (1943)
"The Eve of St. Mark" (1944)
"Wilson" (1944)
"Laura" (1944)
"The Keys of the Kingdom" (1945)
"A Royal Scandal" (1945)
"Leave Her to Heaven" (1945)
"Shock" (1946)
"Dragonwyck" (1946)
"The Web" (1947)
"Moss Rose" (1947)
"The Long Night" (1947)
"Up in Central Park" (1948)
"Abbott & Costello Meet Frankenstein"(1948) (voice only)
"The Three Musketeers" (1948)
"Rogues' Regiment" (1948)
"The Bribe" (1949)
"Bagdad" (1949)
"Champagne for Caesar" (1950)
"The Baron of Arizona" (1950)
"Curtain Call at Cactus Creek" (1950)
"His Kind of Woman" (1951)
"Adventures of Captain Fabian" (1951)
"The Las Vegas Story" (1952)
"Picture" (1952) (narrator only)
"House of Wax" (1953)
"Dangerous Mission" (1954)
"Casanova's Big Night" (1954)
"The Mad Magician" (1954)
"Son of Sinbad" (1955)
"Serenade" (1958)
"The Vagabond King" (1956) (narrator only)
"The Ten Commandments" (1956)
"The Story of Mankind" (1957)
"The Fly" (1958)
"House on Haunted Hill" (1959)
"The Big Circus" (1959)
"The Bat" (1959)
"Return of the Fly" (1959)
"The Tingler" (1959)
"The House of Usher" (1960)
"The Pit and the Pendulum" (1961)
"Master of the World" (1961)
"Naked Terror" (1961) (narrator only)
"Queen of the Nile" (1962)
"Rage of the Buccaneers" (1962)
"Tales of Terror" (1962)
"Convicts 4" (1962)
"Confessions of an Opium Eater" (1962)
"Tower of London" (1962)
"The Raven" (1963)
"Diary of a Madman" (1963)
"Beach Party" (1963)
"Twice Told Tales" (1963)
"The Comedy of Terrors" (1963)
"Taboos of the World" (1963) (narrator only)
"The Haunted Palace" (1964)
"The Last Man on Earth" (1964)
"The Masque of the Red Death" (1964)
"The Tomb of Ligeia" (1964)
"War Gods of the Deep" (1965)
"Dr. Goldfoot and the Bikini Machine" (1965)
"Dr. Goldfoot and the Girl Bombs" (1966)
"House of 1,000 Dolls" (1967)
"The Jackals" (1967)
"Witchfinder General" (1968)
"Spirits of the Dead" (1968) (narrator only)
"More Dead Than Alive" (1969)
"The Oblong Box" (1969)
"The Trouble With Girls" (1969)
"Scream and Scream Again" (1970)
"Cry of the Banshee" (1970)
"The Abominable Dr. Phibes" (1971)
"Dr. Phibes Rises Again" (1972)
"Theatre of Blood" (1973)
"Madhouse" (1974)
"The Devil's Triangle" (1974) (narrator only)
"Percy's Progress" (1974)
"Journey into Fear" (1974)
"Scavenger Hunt" (1979)
"Romance in the Jugular Vein" (1980)
"The Monster Club" (1981)
"The House of Long Shadows" (1983)
"Bloodbath at the House of Death" (1984)
"Escapes" (1985)
"The Great Mouse Detective" (1986) (voice only)
"The Offspring" (1986)
"The Whales of August" (1987)
"Dead Heat" (1988)
"Backtrack" (1989)
"Edward Scissorhands" (1990)

MYSTERY PHOTO DEPARTMENT

WHAT EVIL LURKS?

THE SHADOW NOSE!

MYSTERY PHOTO #203

Ready to tackle another phantom photo? Is this chap a werewolf who lost his fur? How about a loser in an Uncle Fester lookalike contest? Is he the dreaded Fan, Tom of the Opera? Can you guess where on Earth—or off it—this horror character came from? If you can't quite place the face, try rearranging the letters in the phrase below. The name of the Star in the foto as well as the name of the film is in the following folderol:

ROAR LO HIS SISTERS PHOTO U REEP

Send a postcard with your guess to: FAMOUS MONSTERS MYSTERY PHOTO c/o Miss Terry, POB 9669, N. Hollywood, CA 91609 and find your name in print in issue #204 if your right.

ANSWER TO MYSTERY PHOTO #203

DID YOU RECOGNIZE last isue's puzzler pic or unscramble the clue words "A Mant Slay Son Of Darthe"? Dozens of you correctly identified it as New World's bizarre future vision of LAST DAYS OF MAN ON EARTH. Many of you even knew it was based on the story "The Final Programme" by Michael Moorcock. Right guessers, whose answers we received before we went to press, were

Peter Atkins, Doug Ferrini, Dan Sweet, Jim Rhodes, Quin Bernhagen, Walter Von Bosau, Chuck Voliers, Max Meehan, Jim Kirkland, Kyle D. Smith, Richard Harland Smith, Harvey Schwartz, Barry Kraus, Tom Triman, Jeff A. Kurta and Kevin Hoxsey.

Thanks to all those who wrote in.

GOOD WRAP

I appreciated Walter Daugherty's article "Wrapping on the Mummy"...exactly the kind of golden-age monster coverage I crave. It's great to have **FM** back and I'm pleased with the news that it will be going monthly. Please continue to help us celebrate our favorite film genre.

TOM TRIMAN
Santa Ana, CA

• Not only is FM going monthly, but my demented publisher, the fanatic Mr. Ferry, has talked me into editing a new FJA science fiction magazine (ala SPACEMEN, but more) and a new comic book series! Add that to my agency work, convention appearances, research projects, TV interviews...I'm not getting any younger! (Altho I think he knows about the picture of Forian Gray in my closet.)—4e

IS THIS REALLY NECESSARY?

I was happy to read in Issue 202 about Karloff and about Stephen King's first story, but I was sad to learn about the death of Carroll Borland. I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to meet this beautiful woman at the **FM** Con. Last issue someone said that **FAMOUS MONSTERS** might not be needed anymore. Well, I guess this answers that question. You made it possible for her to meet her old fans and to be introduced to a whole new generation. Without **FAMOUS MONSTERS** and Forry Ackerman many of the people who started the whole genre and helped build it to what it is now would be forgotten. I'm sure there is a ten year old out there now reading issue #202 who will be the next John Landis or Joe Dante.

DAN McGRATH
Moodus, CT

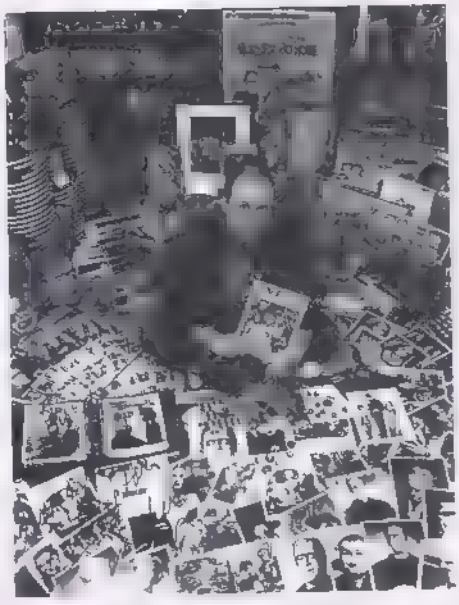
WANTED! MORE READERS LIKE

JACOB JARVEA

ROHRER-SCHOCK TEST

While reading issue #202, I began thinking of my own past with your magazine. My best firend, John, and I bought every issue of **FM**. My favorite TV show was Creature Feature which broadcast all the movies highlighted in **FM**. My earliest memory was of watching PSYCHO in a drive-in in 1960 at the age of two! My parents wanted us to stay awake only for the first feature, but I peeked above the seat. Throughout my childhood I collected every monster model made by Aurora. John and I built a boy's clubhouse called the Monster Club back by the "hedge row". We would sit inside this clubhouse and read each issue as soon as I brought it home from the drugstore. When we were finished, each one was passed among neighbors and friends. This meant that the magazine was pretty well worn by the time it got back to me. My **FM** collection was even considered valuable enough to be stolen during my ninth birthday party.

WANTED! MORE READERS LIKE



KEVIN BURNS
MASTER MUNSTER MAVEN

I had an interest in art and began drawing monsters from the pages of FM. I must have turned out over 1000 pictures of Frankenstein, the Wolf Man and Dracula during this period. With constant practice I was able to improve my drawing abilities. Throughout all of this my parents never batted an eye. They stayed at my side, even when I brought road kills home to dissect. All this in spite of the fact my family were all church goers. **FM** helped encourage my creative talents. I still remember daydreams of myself as a vampire, able to hypnotize beautiful women by simply looking into their eyes. I recall I didn't have much luck with this when I tried it out in real life.

Twenty years later I am now an art teacher in elementary school. I constantly have parents tell me their concerns about their little "Joey" drawing monsters at home all the time. They worry that their child has emotional problems that they need to address. I tell them "Don't worry; I did the same thing when I was a kid. I have no criminal history and pay my taxes like any average person. Encourage their drawing abilities!" Indeed, my most creative students draw monsters.

I think that real life is much more horrific than any monster that appears in **FM**. My preoccupation with monsters as a child did not lead me into Satanism or a life of crime. My reply to any critic of **FM** is this: This magazine may be the catalyst to encourage a child or teen to get into reading and to use their imagination. Welcome back, **FM**!

KEN ROHRER
Indianapolis, IN

• You could point out to those concerned parents the rogues' gallery of FJA alumni-Stephen King, John Landis, Joe Dante, Steven Spielberg, George Lucus, not to mention the plethora of radicals whose words have graced these pages like Ray Bradbury, Robert Bloch, Curt Siodmak, Gene Roddenberry, Bill Warren and a few hundred more. We like to think of FM as the "American Movie Classics" of ImagiMovies (another of Forry's coinages, by the way). Forry Ackerman is to fantasticinema as Hugh Hefner is to sex—they brought class to subjects long considered to be trash.—Pub

WANTED! MORE READERS LIKE

THOMAS JARVELA

ATTENTION FANG GANG!

Your reactions to this issue are earnestly solicited. Forry reads every letter personally to select those for publication. And now, everyone who writes to **FM** will receive an Acknowledgement by mail. If we hear from you, you'll hear from us! When Forry reads a letter he likes to know the person behind it, so include a snapshot of yourself if you can. We'd also like to see your drawings, makeup creations, sculptures or other monstrous art. (sorry, due to volume we can't return anything you send so please don't send anything you want back) Address your letters to:

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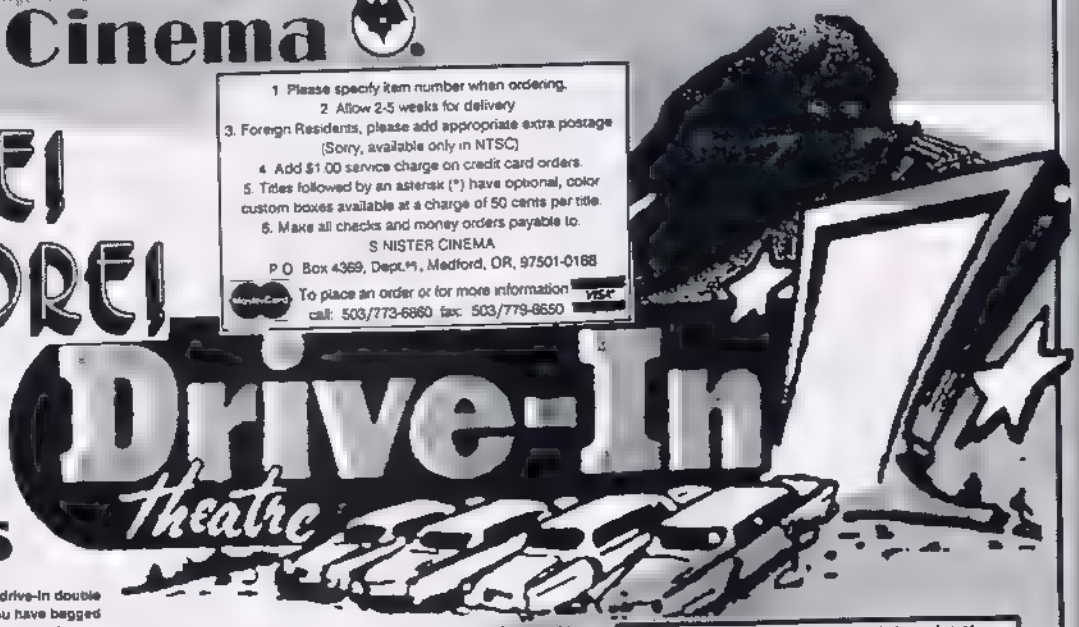

Many of you have inquired about our previous drive-in double features that are no longer available. Some of you have begged us to re-release them. Some of you have even threatened us with bodily harm if we didn't. But now, the wait is over. Here are 34 of our previous D.I. combos, available once again for a limited time. Many of these double bill classics have been partially upgraded, and some of them (#s 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 14, and 25) have been completely remastered from start to finish.

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Wax nostalgic for the incredibly low price of

$19.95

per double feature

Please add $2.05 per double feature for packaging, handling, and postage

Here's the lineup

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 1 (#DI-01)

THE KILLER SHREWS (1959) James Best, Ingrid Goude, Ken Curtis, Gordon McClendon
THE GIANT GILA MONSTER (1959) Don Sullivan, Lisa Simone Shug Fisher, Jerry Cortwright

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 2 (#DI-02)

HORROR CHAMBER OF DR. FAUSTUS (1959) Pierre Brasseur, Edith Scob, Alida Valli
THE MANSTER (1960) Peter Dyneley, Jane Hylton, Satoshi [redacted]

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 3 (#DI-03)

CREATURE FROM THE HAUNTED SEA (1961) Antony Carbone, Betsy Jones Moreland, Edward Wain, directed by Roger Corman
THE DEVIL'S PARTNER (1958) Ed Nelson, Jean Allison, Richard Crane, Edgar Buchanon.

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 4 (#DI-04)

ATTACK OF THE GIANT LEECHES (1959) Ken Clarke, Yvette Vickers, Bruno Vesota, Michael Emmett
A BUCKET OF BLOOD (1959) Dick Miller, Barboura Morris, Antony Carbone, Ed Nelson, Bruno Vesota, Judy Bamber, directed by Roger Corman

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 5 (#DI-05)

ASSIGNMENT OUTER SPACE (1960) Rick Von Nutter, Gaby Farinon, David Montresor, Archie Savage
THE PHANTOM PLANET (1961) Dean Fredericks, Coleen Gray, Anthony Dexter, Delores Faith, Francis X. Bushman

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 6 (#DI-06)

THE WASP WOMAN (1959) Susan Cabot, Fred Eisley, Barboura Morris, Michael Mark, directed by Roger Corman.
BEAST FROM HAUNTED CAVE (1959) Michael Forest, Frank Wolff, Sheila Carol, Wally Campo

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 8 (#DI-08)

BEYOND THE TIME BARRIER (1959) Robert Clarke, Darlene Tompkins, Arianne Arden, Vladimir Sokoloff
AMAZING TRANSPARENT MAN (1959) Douglas Kennedy, Marguerite Chapman, James Griffith, Ivan Triesault.

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 9 (#DI-09)

INCREDIBLE PETRIFIED WORLD (1957) Robert Clarke, John Carradine, Phyllis Coates, Sheila Carol
TEENAGE ZOMBIES (1957) Don Sullivan, Steve Conte, Katherine Victor, Jay Hawk

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 11 (#DI-11)

LAST WOMAN ON EARTH (1960) Betsy Jones Moreland, Antony Carbone, Edward Wain, directed by Roger Corman.
LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS (1960) Jonathan Haze, Mel Welles, Jackie Joseph, Dick Miller, Jack Nicholson.

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 14 (#DI-14)

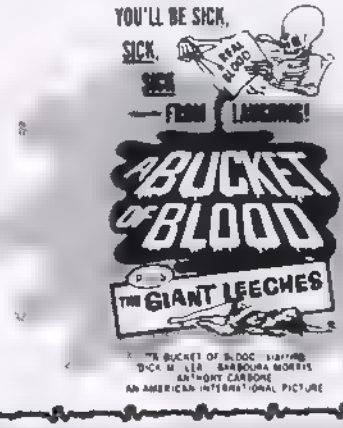
HORROR HOTEL (1960) Christopher Lee, Betta St. John, Patricia Jessel, William Abner
THE HEAD (1959) Michel Simon, Horst Frank, Karin Kernke, Paul Dahlke

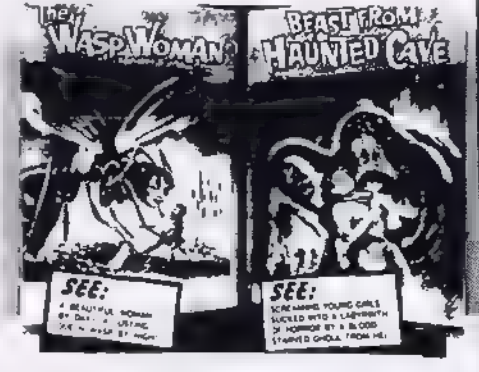
DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 25 (#DI-25)

CARNIVAL OF SOULS (1962) Candace Hilligoss, Sidney Berger, Herk Harvey, Francis Feist.
THE DEVIL'S MESSENGER (1961) Lon Chaney, Karen Kadler, John Crawford

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 26 (#DI-26)

HERCULES IN THE HAUNTED WORLD (1961) Reg Park, Christopher Lee, Leonora Ruffo, directed by Mario Bava.
CASTLE OF BLOOD (1964) Barbara Steele, George Riviere, Margaret Robsahm.





DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 27 (#DI-27)

GIANT OF METROPOLIS (1962) Gordon Mitchell, Bella Cortez, Liana Orfei, Furio Meniconi.
INVINCIBLE GLADIATOR (1962) Richard Harrison, Isabelle Corey, Joseph Marco.

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 30 (#DI-30)

COUNT DRACULA'S GREAT LOVE (1972) Paul Naschy, Vic Winner, Ingrid Garbo. Rated "R"
THE VAMPIRE'S NIGHT ORGY (1973, aka **ORGY OF THE VAMPIRES**) Jack Taylor, John Richard. Rated "R"

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 32 (#DI-32)

SKI TROOP ATTACK (1959) Michael Forest, Sheila Carol, Wally Campo, Roger Corman.
BATTLE OF BLOOD ISLAND (1959) Ron Kennedy, Richard Devon.

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 34 (#DI-34)

SWAMP WOMEN (1956) Beverly Garland, Marie Windsor, Michael "Touch" Connors, Carole Matthews.
GUNSLINGER (1956) John Ireland, Beverly Garland, Allison Hayes, directed by Roger Corman.

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 35 (#DI-35)

BATTLE OF THE WORLDS (1962) Claude Rains, Bill Carter, Maya Brent.
ATOM AGE VAMPIRE (1962) Alberto Lupo, Susanne Loret, Sergio Fantoni.

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 37 (#DI-37)

NIGHT TIDE (1961) Dennis Hopper, Linda Lawson, Luana Anders, Gavin Muir.
BATTLE BEYOND THE SUN (1963) Ed Perry, Andy Stewart, Bruce Hunter.

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 38 (#DI-38)

ISLAND OF LOST GIRLS (1973) Brad Harris, Tony Kendall, Monica Pardo. Rated "R"
FRANKENSTEIN'S CASTLE OF FREAKS (1973) Rossano Brazzi, Michael Dunn, Boris Lugosi. Rated "R"

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 39 (#DI-39)

NIGHTMARE CASTLE (1965) Barbara Steele, Paul Miller, Rik Battaglia.
DIABOLICAL DR. Z (1965) Howard Vernon, Mabel Karr, Estella [redacted].

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 40 (#DI-40)

HANDS OF A STRANGER (1962) Paul Lukather, James Stapleton, Joan Harvey, Irish McCalla.
TORMENTED (1960) Richard Carlson, Juli Redding, Susan Gordon, Lugene Sanders.

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 43 (#DI-43)

THE MAGIC SWORD (1961) Basil Rathbone, Gary Lockwood, Anne Helm, Vampira.
DR. BLOOD'S COFFIN (1960) Kieron Moore, Hazel Court, Ian Hunter.

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 44 (#DI-44)

WEB OF THE SPIDER (1970) Anthony Franciosa, Michele Mercier, Klaus Kinski.
SATANIC (1959 aka **SATANIK**) Julio Pena, Madge Kabopka, Armando Calvo.

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 45 (#DI-45)

HIGH SCHOOL CAESAR (1960) John Ashley, Gary Vinson, Lowell Brown, Judy Nugent.
DATE BAIT (1960) Gary Clarke, Mario Ryan, Richard Gering.

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 46 (#DI-46)

THE EYE CREATURES (1959) John Ashley, Shirly McLine, Cynthia Hull, Chet Davis.
ZONTAR, THE THING FROM VENUS (1959) John Agar, Anthony Houston, Susan Bjurman, Warren Hammack.

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 49* (#DI-49)

HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL (1959) Vincent Price, Carol Ohmart, Richard Long, Carolyn Craig, Elisha Cook.
THE BAT (1959) Vincent Price, Agnes Moorehead, John Sutton.

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 50* (#DI-50)

CURSE OF THE DEVIL (1973) Paul Naschy, Faye Falcon, Maritza Olivares. Rated "R"
TOWER OF SCREAMING VIRGINS (1971) Terry Torday, Jean Pial. Rated "R"

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 51* (#DI-51)

FANGS OF THE LIVING DEAD (1968, aka **MELENKA**) Anita Eckberg, John Hamilton, Diana Lorys.
KILL BABY KILL (1966 aka **CURSE OF THE LIVING DEAD**) G. Rossi Stuart, Erica Blanc, Max Lawrence. Directed by Mario Bava.

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 53* (#DI-53)

SELA LUGOSI MEETS A BROOKLYN GORILLA (1952) Bela Lugosi, Sammy Petrillo, Duke Mitchell, Charlita, Muriel Landers.
BRIDE OF THE GORILLA (1951) Lon Chaney, Raymond Burr, Barbara Payton, Tom Conway.

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 55* (#DI-55)

SWORD AND THE DRAGON (1956) Boris Andreyev, Natalie Medvedeva, Andrei Abrikosov.
THE DEVIL'S COMMANDMENT (1956 aka **I, VAMPIRI**) Gianna Canale, Dario Michaelis.

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 56* (#DI-56)

BLOODSUCKERS (1970) Peter Cushing, Patrick MacNee, Patrick Mower, Imogen Hassall. Rated "R"
BLOODTHIRST (1966) Robert Winston, Yvonne Nielson, Judy Dennis.

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 58* (#DI-58)

SPIDER BABY (1964) Lon Chaney, Carol Ohmart, Jill Banner, Mantan Moreland.
MONDO BALORDO (1964) Documentary, narrated by Boris Karloff.

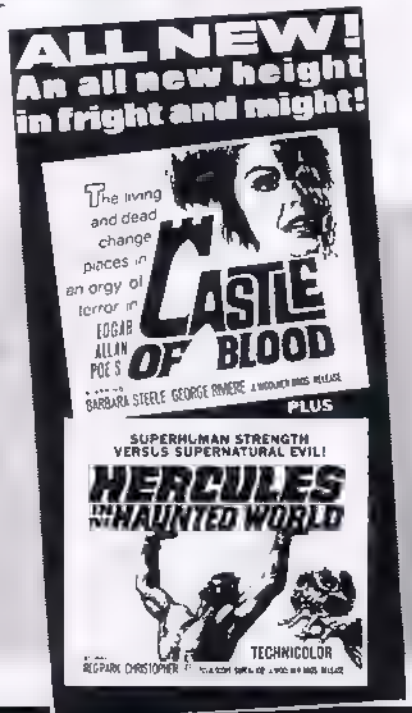
DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 59* (#DI-59)

HORRIBLE DR. HICHCOCK (1962) Barbara Steele, Robert Flemyng, Montgomery Glenn.
AWFUL DR. ORLOFF (1962) Howard Vernon, Conrado San Martin, Diana Lorys.

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 60* (#DI-60)

THE FIENDISH GHOULS (1959 aka **MANIA**) Peter Cushing, Donald Pleasance, Dermot Walsh.
HORRORS OF SPIDER ISLAND (1959 aka **IT'S HOT IN PARADISE**) Alex D'Arcy, Barbara Valentine, Rainer Brand, Helga Neuner, Eva Schauland.

CREATURE FROM THE HAUNTED SEA
What was the unspeakable secret of the SEA
half man, half-beast, he sold his soul FOR PASSION
AND
THE DEVIL'S PARTNER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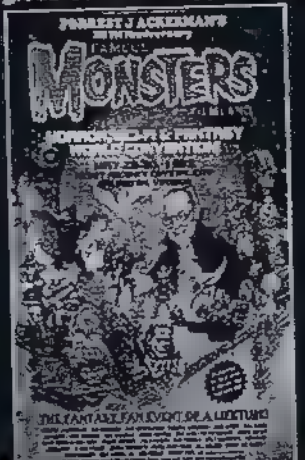

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Announcing a new release!

Carroll Borland was the legendary star of early cinema, who's portrayal of "Luna" opposite Bela Lugosi in the 1935 motion picture horror classic, *Mark of the Vampire*, indelibly etched in the minds of moviegoers the "look, the style and the sexuality of female vampires for generations to come."

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What was the secret of their relationship?

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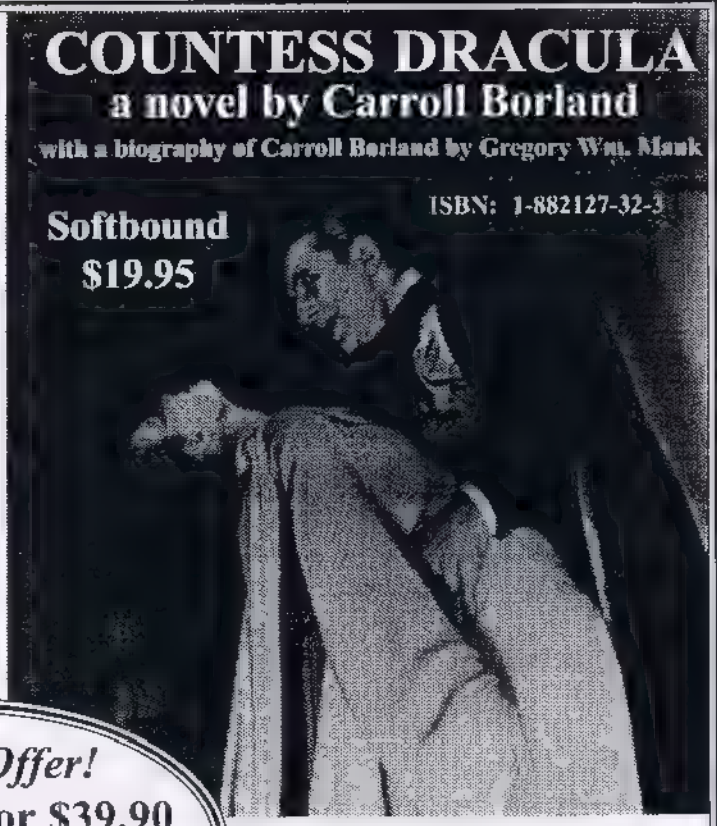

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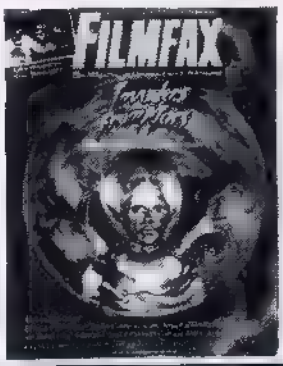

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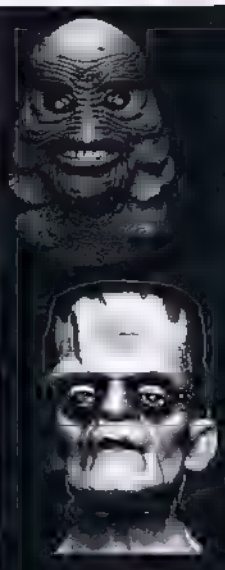

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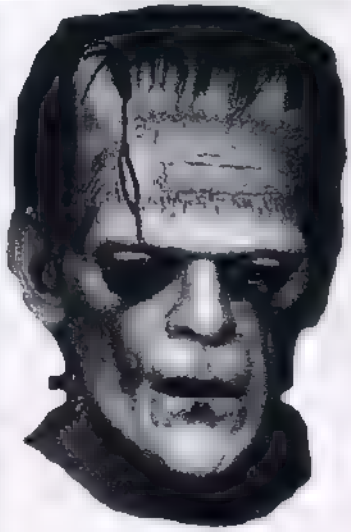

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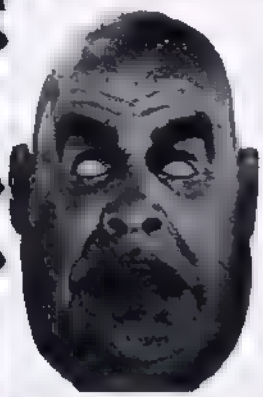

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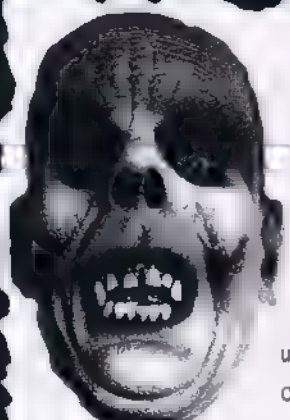

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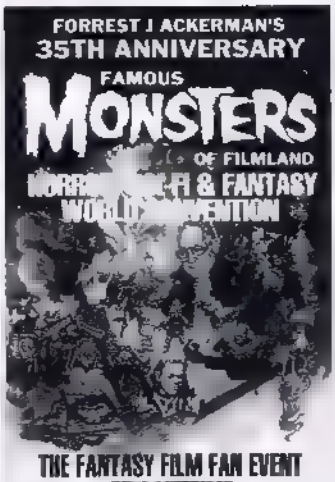

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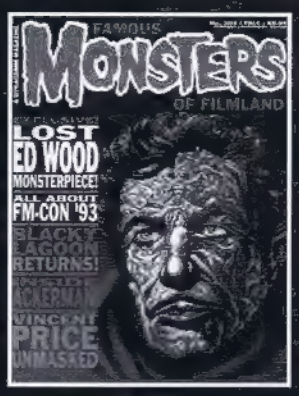

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